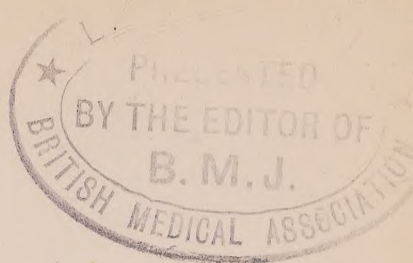


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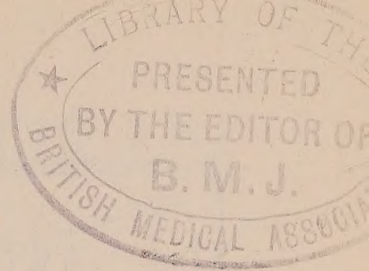


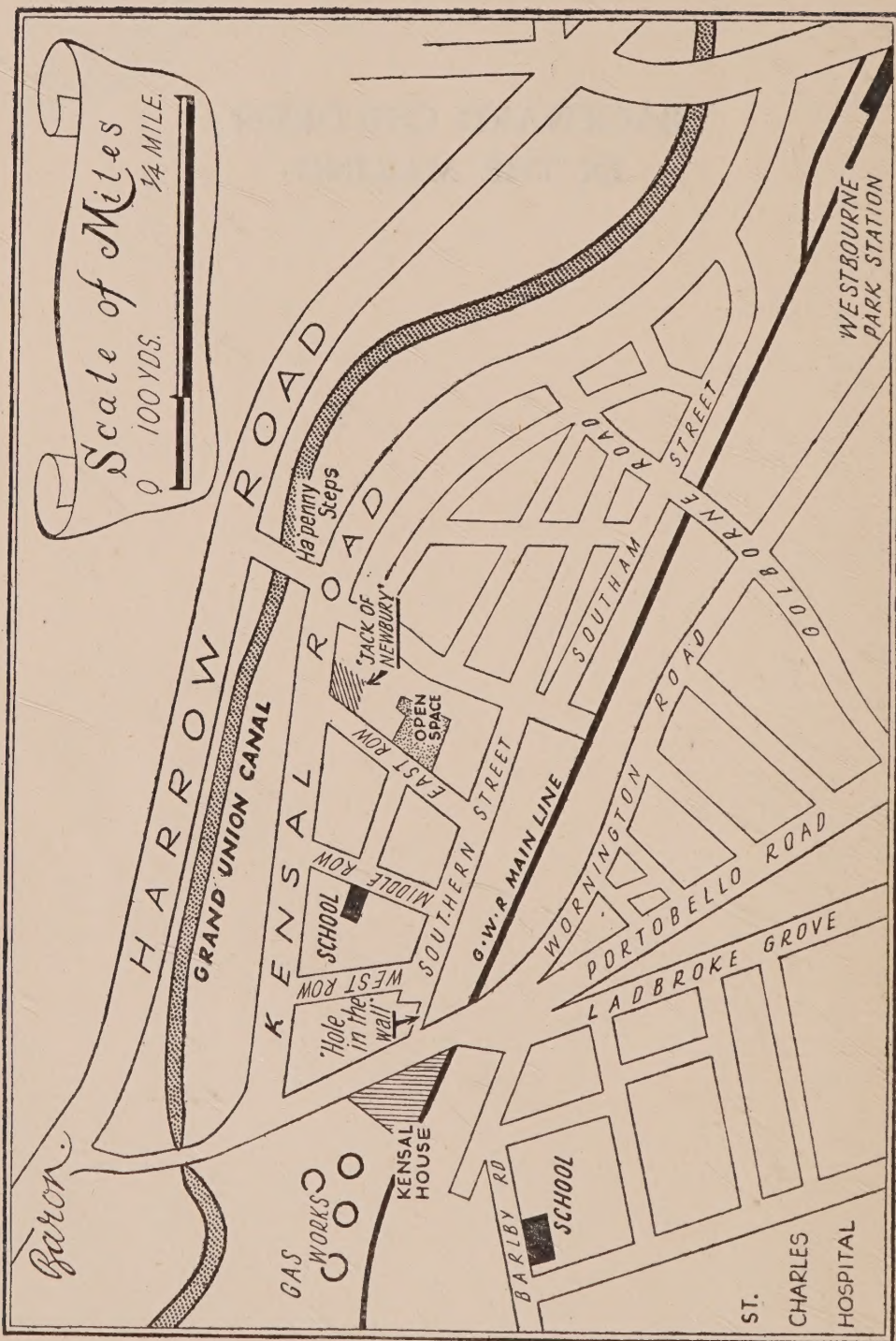
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BACKWARD CHILDREN
IN THE MAKING





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BACKWARD CHILDREN IN THE MAKING

by

CHARLES S. SEGAL

Author of Penn'orth of Chips

With an Introductory Note by

SIR CYRIL BURT

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And, above all, to my Boys and Girls, and their Parents.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

by

SIR CYRIL BURT

TEN years ago, in a challenging book with a challenging title—*Penn'orth of Chips*—Mr. Charles Segal described the social conditions in a group of backward boys who were growing up in a working class area in London. In his latest volume he puts before us the results of a further investigation, dealing with another batch of pupils from a neighbouring school in the same district. In each book he has sought to adopt the most recent methods; and has collected factual and statistical data to support his descriptions. It thus becomes possible to make comparisons between the two groups—the earlier and the later; and so to discover some of the main results of the troubled period through which we have just passed. Only upon exact knowledge of this kind can the educational and social policy of the near future be satisfactorily based.

In the material here offered we can see how the educational progress of the child is influenced by all the numerous factors that together make up his material and social environment. The health of the mother, the wages of the father, the conditions of housing, and the security and insecurity of the family as a whole, their daily experiences, the papers and books they read—these and other features of the child's home life are bound to affect, directly or indirectly, the success of the work in the classroom and will largely decide its success or failure. Yet very little is known in actual detail about the precise way in which these and other factors operate.

Mr. Segal believes that the activities and ambitions of the modern boy and girl are greatly influenced by what

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they see at the cinema and what they hear through the wireless. How many children listen to the Children's Hour? What is the effect of following exciting serials like "Dick Barton"? Mr. Segal carefully records the facts, and endeavours to analyse the apparent results.

One outstanding merit of his books is that he always endeavours to make both his observations and his arguments quantitative. He does not vaguely suggest that boys are now more backward in reading than they were before the war: he shows, by means of actual test-results, how the post-war pupil compares with the pre-war. Even when he is studying the effects of the wireless programmes or attendance at the cinema, he still seeks to gather facts rather than impressions.

The conclusions of a single investigator are necessarily limited. But in my view it is much more valuable to make an intensive study of a small group than to carry out a massive but superficial survey of large numbers. In regard to many of the questions that he raises, alternative views are no doubt possible. Yet even those who are not prepared to endorse all his suggestions must nevertheless admit that both his data and his inferences deserve serious consideration, and have a close bearing on public policy.

Mr. Segal has shown what a teacher can do who uses with initiative all the sources of information open to him and seeks to collect his data in accordance with a scientific plan. Similar studies by others over a more extensive field would greatly add to our knowledge and understanding. Meanwhile every teacher and every educationist will be deeply grateful to him for his pioneer work; and those who are tempted to criticize what he has written will, let us hope, feel stimulated to follow his example and undertake similar investigations of their own.

CYRIL BURT.

PREFACE

IN 1937 I conducted an inquiry into the conditions—physical, mental, social and economic—of my class of 26 backward boys at Barlby Road Junior Boys' School, North Kensington, London. That inquiry showed that essential social amenities were lacking as far as these children were concerned. Parental unemployment, part unemployment, and the low income level of the parents employed, led to underfeeding of the children, to a low standard of clothing, to overcrowding and slum housing conditions, to lack of travel and first-hand experiences. These factors gave rise to poor physical health and in turn to mental and educational levels below the average for the country as a whole. Evidence produced of experiments performed with children and statistics made available by specialist authorities and collected in my book, *Penn'orth of Chips*, published by Messrs. Gollancz, Ltd. in 1939, showed that there was a definite relationship between environment and physical and mental development.

Prior to the war, I had been teaching for 22 years in slum areas; of these, 12 years were spent at Barlby Road School. It was in the course of a visit to this school in 1929 that His Majesty's Inspector—Mr. P. B. Coles—suggested the formation of a "Reading Class" for backward readers. I was entrusted with the class. To qualify for this work, I attended two full-time courses organised on behalf of the Ministry of Education by the National Association for Mental Health. Further, there were two sets of lectures with the National Institute of Industrial Psychology, accompanied by practical work to obtain the necessary qualifications for the administration of Intelligence Tests.

PREFACE

Ten years have elapsed since that investigation was completed. Much has happened in those years. A second World War has been fought and won. Children have been living under conditions never experienced before. Social changes have taken place. How have the war and post-war conditions and these changes affected my 31 children in Class 2B of Middle Row Junior School?

With the object of ascertaining these conditions, the changes and their effects, I have conducted an investigation on lines similar to those undertaken ten years ago. My class, as was the case in 1937, consists of backward and difficult boys.

Barlby Road is not far from my present school, Middle Row. Until the summer of 1947, the children of the latter had their dinners at Barlby Road School.

Hence the environment and the condition of the children in these adjacent schools correspond today as they did in 1937.

It may be mentioned that Sir Robert Blair, then L.C.C. Education Officer, was shocked by the large number of backward and delicate children in the school. An investigation into these conditions was conducted by the School Care Committee in January, 1924. This report cited in-breeding, bad housing conditions and the air-raids towards the end of the 1914-18 war as the main causes of the deficiencies noted.

At that time many of the basements in Southam Street were inhabited and the low physical and mental state of the children living in these basements was particularly noticed. The investigators must have experienced great satisfaction at the closing of the basements by the Kensington Borough Council. The Care Committee appreciated the need for an educated working population, for they point in their report to the danger of turning into

PREFACE

the wage-earning world an increasing number of ill-equipped children.

In conducting the present investigation, I have borne in mind Sir Cyril Burt's dictum—"The citizens of tomorrow are the children of today". What kind of citizens do we wish to rear? The citizens of tomorrow need to be of a higher type both physically and mentally than the pre-war men and women. It will take many years to make good the destruction of the war period and to surpass the living conditions of the years prior to the war. People will be called upon to work harder, to use more intricate machines; to initiate production plans, and to ensure their fulfilment; to take a more active part in social life and democratic government; and to improve their cultural level. This calls for higher standards of education and of living conditions. Suggestions made in this report, if carried out, should help to provide those conditions essential for the raising of a generation of happy, well-balanced citizens.

I take this opportunity of thanking the parents of my school boys for providing the intimate information contained in this Report, and for the kindly welcome extended to me on visiting them at their homes. For obvious reasons all names mentioned are fictitious.

I would state that the work carried out by Sir Cyril Burt on behalf of the backward, subnormal and delinquent child has been an inspiration to me. There is no task so satisfying as that undertaken on behalf of these children handicapped by poor environment and low physical and mental standards.

As I am engaged under the London County Council, it is necessary to state that the Council is not responsible for opinions or conclusions arrived at herein.

CHAPTER I

"NOBBY"

"The courses of his youth promised it not." (*Henry V.*)

IN December, 1946, on leaving school during the lunch-hour, I met "Nobby" in the uniform of a soldier. "Nobby" was an old boy of Barlby Road School, one of the toughest of them all. He told me that he had served in the Forces for three and a half years; was married, and that he had a baby girl of 19 months. After a brief exchange of greetings, we arranged to meet so that he could tell me his story. He certainly had one to tell.

"There was no harm in me; I was just pig-headed; I would not listen to reason and so I fell. I was born near Barlby Road School and had three brothers and three sisters. My father died when I was two years old. My step-father was on bad terms with us children. I was belted every day. I was not allowed out to play, so I would get out and stop out for two or three nights at a stretch, sleeping in a mews and stealing food from barrows. I had all the usual children's ailments and went to school at the age of five years. I was unmanageable in the infants' school and after being caught stealing sixpence, I was transferred to the boys' school, one year sooner than I should have been. In my first class, I gave so much trouble that I was transferred to another. I played truant frequently, ran behind cars, and stole whenever I could.

"At this time you [the writer] had an open-air class in the Recreation Ground. You caught me truanting in the grounds, where I was having a swing. You asked me to join your class, I agreed and the headmaster arranged this. I was regular in attendance until you had an illness which kept you away from

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the class. I broke down again. I was eight years old then. Already I had been bound over for breaking into a house with older boys.

“At nine years, I was caught stealing at Marks & Spencer’s. I was sent to an approved school for six years. I earned two years’ remission for good behaviour and was discharged at 14 years of age.

“The food, environment and education at the approved school were good, but mixing with the other boys was harmful. The discipline was harsh—we had plenty of stick; doubling round the square for up to an hour at a stretch and hard clouting; the stopping of leave. This was one day in three months, and summer leave of ten days if our conduct had been good for one year. I took part in the school band; I won four prizes for music, and can now play eight instruments. My opinion is that 90 per cent of approved school and Borstal boys go to prison afterwards. I think half the children need not be sent to approved schools or Borstal. They should not be segregated. Their crimes are just children’s pranks and high spirits for which they have had no outlet. More kindness is wanted and more understanding. They need plenty of cricket and football. They should learn the theory of music and how to play instruments. Parents should love their children; take an interest in them; make them feel important; and take them out frequently. Treat children as equals and do not shout at them. I now take my nephew, whose parents find him difficult, to football matches. He loves football. I wish I had gone to a play-centre or club, and that there were more playing-fields.

“At 14, I tried to join the Army Band, but was rejected as I had a thumb deformed since birth. I worked in an oil shop for three months; I was caught stealing and was sacked. I was a van boy for two years. I loved motors, as do all boys, and I was interested in how they worked.

“At 16, I broke into a house and was sent to Borstal till

“NOBBY”

1939. I learnt more of criminal life in Borstal than anywhere else.

“After leaving Borstal, I met in January, 1940, two boys from the approved school, and together we committed robbery with violence. A police car chased our car. The other two got out, the police car caught up with me, and my car overturned. I was sentenced to three years’ penal servitude and 20 strokes of the birch.

“I was in prison till March, 1942, having earned one year’s remission. I learnt a lot for the good in prison. The older men there gave me good advice and a sound outlook on life. ‘Crime is a mug’s game’, they said. I joined the Army voluntarily. I had a Commando training and I was wounded on D-Day while landing. I was in hospital for seven weeks, then convalescent four weeks. Then I was sent back to Germany, where I was injured in an accident.

“I expect to be demobbed shortly and get a lorry of my own. My wife and I have bought a bungalow two miles from a seaside town. We are very happy with our baby and I shall do nothing to break up our home.”

This is “Nobby’s” story and it crystallises all the wisdom and findings of experienced investigators, magistrates, teachers and social workers.

CHAPTER II

BACKWARDNESS

“The Ministry has made special regulations in the Act of 1944 for children with less serious handicaps to receive their special education treatment in ordinary schools. The regulations now prescribe tuition according to the special needs of such children, either individually, or in small groups or classes, including adequate facilities for practical work. Provision of special classes for such children will help to remove that sense of frustration which must be felt by a child unable through no fault of his own to keep up with his fellows in an ordinary class. At the same time, such children will not lose the advantage of belonging to the community which is to be found in a large, ordinary school.” (*L.C.C. School Plan*, 1947.)

MIDDLE ROW JUNIOR MIXED SCHOOL consists of seven classes arranged for a three-year course. The children from the infants' school were examined in September, 1946, by the Headmaster, Mr. F. A. Wall, in reading, and were arranged in Classes 1A, 1B, and 1C. The school settled down to routine working under organised conditions of class grouping. Class 2B originally consisted of girls and boys, but at Christmas, 1946, the girls were exchanged for some difficult boys from another class. Two boys were certified mentally defective and transferred to a Special School. The class then had 31 boys.

In order to get the measure of the class, standardised tests were imposed. Those used in reading were Sir Cyril Burt's Reading Accuracy Tests.

These were standardised between the two world wars. They consist of ten words for each year from the age of

BACKWARDNESS

four to 14. A child of 10 years 0 months (10-0 yrs.) achieving a mark of 10.0 years in the reading test would have a reading quotient of 100 per cent. Burt considers that the medium child would get a quotient between 85 and 115 per cent. A child getting below 85 per cent would be deemed technically "backward". He estimated that 10 per cent of the country's children were backward before 1939.

My 1947 class, on testing, showed 27 backward readers and four medium or normal readers. Their chronological ages, that is, age from birth, ranged from eight years nine months to eleven years two months, while their reading ages extended from 4.8 years to 10.2 years.

To determine the general reading of the school as compared with my own class, I gave the same reading test to the children of the other classes. Of 246 children tested, including the 31 of my own class, 132 had a score of less than 85 per cent for their age. This means that 132 boys and girls in the school were technically "backward" in reading. Expressed as a percentage of the number tested, 54 per cent of the school were backward readers—over half the school. This is a striking result when compared with Burt's pre-war estimate of 10 per cent backwardness for the country as a whole and 14.4 per cent for the electoral area of North Kensington.

A study of the attainments of the girls and boys considered separately showed a higher proportion of backward readers among the boys than the girls—46 out of 97 girls, equal to 47 per cent were backward; while 86 out of 149 boys, equal to 58 per cent were in the backward range for reading.

In my pre-war school, Barlby Road, there were two classes of backward readers and five classes of normal readers—50 backward out of an approximate school roll of 250—i.e. 20 per cent "backward readers". A com-

parison of the reading level before the war and today shows that in the two schools concerned the deterioration in reading is two and a half times the pre-war estimate.

What is the cause of such a serious setback? It should be remembered that all the children in the school were under school age at the beginning of the war. Apart from two who attended nursery schools, they were not caught up by the evacuation scheme. They spent most of the war years in London, subjected to bombing, air-raid warnings, sleeping in shelters, lacking fresh air, living behind blackout curtains. Discipline was relaxed; they ran wild.

What schooling there was in North Kensington was erratic. There could not be steady routine work—the interruptions were too frequent. There were air-raid warnings. Teachers were changed about from school to school. They went to and from evacuation centres; and, after the war, were actively concerned with returning the children to their homes.

It can truly be said that boys and girls now leaving the primary schools have lost up to five years of formal education. Any progress made has been achieved in spite of the difficulties and because of the tenacity, persistence, patience, optimism, and sheer grit of the teachers under conditions which no other generation of teachers has had to endure.

The extension of the school-leaving age to 15 is not enough to make good the loss of the present school generation. The age for leaving school should be raised to 16 to compensate for the loss suffered in the war and to develop a more highly-educated community.

Has education in London as a whole and in the country generally suffered to the same extent? The Ministry of Education's estimate of backwardness for the country is 8 to 9 per cent of registered pupils over seven years of age.

BACKWARDNESS

Mr. E. Shinwell, Secretary for War, was informed on a visit to a regimental holding unit in the British zone of Germany that $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of recruits are rated illiterate. He saw soldiers learning to spell their own names.

The L.C.C in their 1947 Plan state that "the number of educationally subnormal children who shall be educated in ordinary schools is purely conjectural." The Council cannot plan accommodation and staffing until they know how many backward children there are, and cannot therefore comply with the duties entrusted them by the Education Act of 1944.

New investigations as to the incidence of backwardness are necessary for London and the country generally.

Pending the initiation and completion of such investigations, a preliminary estimate of educational level could be obtained from the Common Entrance Examination for children over 10 years of age. This examination determines the kind of secondary school to which children will go on leaving the primary school. The examination consists in London of three papers—General, English and Arithmetic. The General paper tests the intelligence. It should be observed that children who cannot read cannot attempt the questions. Although the General paper contains other than verbal questions, the instructions are given in words and children who cannot read the instructions cannot answer even the non-verbal problems.

CLASS ORGANISATION

The problem of Class 2B is the problem of the school as a whole—how to raise the educational level so that it more closely approximates to the child's age and ability. To designate one class as a backward class is not sufficient. The whole school should be deemed a backward school and staffed accordingly.

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In 1939, the L.C.C. agreed that backward classes should be established with a maximum roll of 30 per class. This school warrants staffing at this standard. The L.C.C. Divisional Officer, recognising the special problems in the school, allowed eight teachers on the staff in 1947, reduced to seven at Easter, 1948. Teaching of reading is a practical subject and should be done in half classes as is done in handicraft and domestic economy centres, and science laboratories. One class teacher for 30 children and the splitting of the classes for the teaching of reading is not asking too much. The bottom class is already divided for reading lessons, with beneficial results. It seems that other classes might be similarly divided and the school be staffed in accordance with this principle. It should be observed that a distinguished public school has one teacher for every 11 boys.

The small class is essential for backward readers. The children must be approached as individuals. Just as a patient who is sick is examined by a doctor and treatment provided, so a child deemed backward in school work needs a personal examination; the causes ascertained and individual treatment prescribed. Only in this way can the backward child be redeemed and progress made so that he can in due course rejoin a normal class.

School education is based on the teaching of number and reading concepts. This teaching is done in the infants' and junior schools and calls for the best teachers with ingenuity to discover methods and to devise apparatus in order to instil these ideas into the children's minds. This stage of teaching calls essentially for an approach to the individual child and a minimum number in the class. It is in these schools that the classes should be smallest. To secure this aim, there should be a national redistribution of teachers, assuring at any rate parity in staffing of the primary and secondary schools.

CHAPTER III

MENTAL PROCESSES

“The influence of heredity is far more elusive than was formerly supposed. Galton’s Law of Regression, a law definitely founded on statistics, reminds us that children of geniuses are rarely so brilliant as their parents; and by the same principle, the offspring of the dull are seldom quite so dull. The chip may be better than the block.” (Sir Cyril Burt, *The Backward Child*. Univ. of London Press.)

WHEN a child is referred to a class for backwardness, the problem for the teacher is not only to assess the degree of retardation in the primary subjects, but to find out the causes and apply remedies, and also to determine whether the child has the intellectual ability to progress at a faster pace than he has done. His mental powers are assessed by intelligence tests. These tests determine “innate, all-round, intellectual efficiency”. In order to explain this definition, it can be broken down into simpler factors. Mental tests measure certain aspects of human behaviour. They assess the ability to profit by experience, the power of abstract thinking, and the degree of adaptability to new situations.

Each test has some special bias: a verbal bias—questions dealing with words; an arithmetical bias—based on figures; visual—depending on diagrams; practical—based on the arrangement of scattered pieces of an apparatus to make up the whole.

Burt’s *Revision of the Stanford Binet Tests* was largely used before the war. These tests have been re-standardised in the U.S.A., but adjustments of the further revision have not yet been standardised for use in England. Some of

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the abilities tested by the Binet Tests are these: reasoning, memory, speed of response and the definition of words. Group tests have been devised for testing a large number of cases at one time. Performance tests are used for measuring intelligence when it is necessary to overcome language difficulties, and handicaps due to environment.

The tests applied by me to each of the boys were Burt's *Revision*. The results are given in terms of Mental Age as compared with Chronological Age; and the Intelligence Quotient (I.Q.) is determined by dividing the mental age by the chronological age and multiplying by 100. A child whose age from birth is 10 and whose mental age is 10 would have an I.Q. of 100 and would be considered an average child in intelligence. Children with an I.Q. between 70 and 85 are deemed dull; children between 90 and 110 are considered normal.

Here is an analysis of the I.Q.s of 30 children tested:

| 80-85 | 85-90 | 91-100 | 101-110 | 111-115 |
|-------|-------|--------|---------|---------|
| 3 | 7 | 8 | 11 | 1 |

It will be observed that 10 boys are below average intelligence, eight are a poor average, 11 are a good average and one above average.

The average chronological age of the class at the time of testing was $10\frac{1}{2}$ years, the average mental age was 9.8 and the average I.Q. was 96.

While the class generally is only a few points below average in intelligence, the standards of attainment in reading and arithmetic are far below the potential mental capacity of the children. Care, however, must be exercised in teaching, as they cannot stand too much mental

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strain. The physical effects of the war and the poor home conditions must be taken into account in class work.

Meaning and use of words play a great part in the Binet Tests, which are weighted on the verbal side. One test, usually administered first, consists of a list of fifty words. The child gives the meanings of as many as he can. At eight years of age, he is expected to know 10 words, at 10 years of age he is expected to know 15 words. In view of the importance of vocabulary to a child being prepared for the civilisation of today, I append the result of the vocabulary test:

| <i>Below 9 words</i> (Fail for 8-year-olds) | <i>10-14 words</i> (Pass at 8-year age level) | <i>15-19 words</i> (Pass at 10-year-old level) |
|--|--|---|
| 13 | 12 | 5 |

The average age of the class was $10\frac{1}{2}$ years from birth, the average vocabulary age was eight years. The children as a whole are over two years backward in vocabulary.

The determination of the intelligence of a child is useful to get a grading of his mental level, and to relate this level to the standard of his attainments in school subjects and for vocational guidance. Apart from school use, these tests are used in industry and in the Armed Forces. By their means, it is possible to sort out the more educable from the less, the more technically gifted from the academic person. In highly organised industry of today, where different abilities are needed for different processes in production, intelligence tests point out the most suitable persons for performing a particular process. In the second world war, testing was useful in placing recruits in those sections of the war machine for which they might be best suited.

There is some conflict of opinion among psychologists as to whether the intellectual ability of a child remains constant from birth, and whether heredity determines the intelligence of the offspring.

Professor J. L. Gray states:

“The constancy of the I.Q. is only relative. When we say that it is constant, we mean simply that if nothing occurs to raise or depress an individual’s comparative intelligence, it will tend to remain the same. Sometimes it is held to prove that intelligence is not influenced by environment. We know quite well that when some really substantial change takes place in a child’s environmental history, his I.Q. will either rise or fall by a greater amount than the rise or fall in the group as a whole.”¹

He continues that the elimination of poverty would almost certainly raise the mean Intelligence Quotient of the population and that improved feeding and housing would do more to raise the educational level than extra efforts in the classroom. The studies made by Freeman, Holzinger and Mitchell, of foster children in Chicago, U.S.A., bear out this argument. The conclusions reached are here summarised:

1. Before being placed in foster homes, the children were tested by Binet’s Tests at an average age of 8 years. On being re-tested 4 years later they had gained on an average 7.5 points in their I.Q. This increase is attributed to the social and cultural superiority of the foster homes.
2. Of these children, those put into very superior foster homes gained substantially more than those adopted into inferior homes.

¹ J. L. Gray, *The Nation’s Intelligence*. (Watts & Co.)

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3. Children adopted into a family at an early age and reared with "own" children very closely resembled the blood children of the family.
4. Children of the same parents adopted by different foster parents resembled each other less than when children of the same parents were reared together.¹

An experiment which questions the opinion that the level of intelligence remains constant is that performed by Bernardine Schmidt. She raised the average performance in Binet Tests of a group of defective children from a serious defective level to a level of below average. She succeeded in this by placing the children in a specially designed social and educational environment for three years. Besides the group that had this special attention, a control group was observed, that did not receive this treatment. The latter group showed a slight fall in ability.²

In considering the mental functioning of the child, there is a tendency to overlook that such functioning is the manifestation of something concrete, namely, the brain. In schools the drive is for better results in Arithmetic and English—the two subjects for Common Entrance Examinations for admission to one of three types of secondary school. Physical development, whether through actual exercise, or school meals, is dropped to second place.

In spite of the recognition in the Education Act that educational progress is directly related to physical efficiency, the training of the mind still seems to be the chief concern of schools; and the relationship of the mind to the body generally disregarded. There is overwhelming evidence that the degree of intellectual expression depends

¹ *The Influence of Environment on the Intelligence, School Achievement, and Conduct of Foster Children*, 27th Year Book, N.S.S.E.

² *Psychological Monograph*, Vol. 60, No. 5. (American Psych. Assoc.)

directly upon the material state of the body. Dr. A. F. Tredgold states that:

“The essential basis of amentia (the state in which the mind has failed to attain normal development), is an imperfect or arrested development of the cerebral neurones (nerve cells of the brain), a fact which is now established beyond doubt by careful microscopical examinations conducted by numerous competent observers.”¹

There are many chemicals which affect the human mind, while many are made in our own bodies in small quantities and help to regulate our behaviour. If a child has defective thyroid glands, then the administration of thyroid extract will cause an increase in the child's intellectual powers.

General physical growth, and with it the production of these very necessary chemicals in the body, depend on the material conditions of life, and they in turn determine the state of health, of intellectual level and behaviour.

Teachers are sometimes asked to assess the intelligence of their children from observation. While this can be done in some broad manner, they can only measure actual achievement rather than the mental ability to achieve. School placing depends on factors other than mental ability. It can make no provision for the lack of energy, emotional instability, the poor homes and the low physical condition of the pupils.

Physical and mental growth are natural processes beginning at birth. To ensure development to the child's fullest capacity, adequate material conditions such as food, air, sunshine, physical exercise and rest, as well as a high cultural standard and opportunities for learning by experience are necessary. The earlier a child is provided

¹ A. F. Tredgold, *Mental Deficiency (Amentia)*. (Bailliere, Tindall & Cox.)

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with an optimum environment, the greater will be his chance of reaching full physical and mental stature.

As has been pointed out, Binet Tests are weighted on the vocabulary side and there is usually a high degree of agreement between the score of the vocabulary test and the final figure of the whole test. Verbal ability is closely dependent on home stimulation, apart from intelligence or school work. Lecturers teaching the administration of Intelligence Tests advise the student to commence with the Vocabulary Test and then begin the full tests at one year below the vocabulary level. In the case of children from institutions, it is usual to begin two years beyond vocabulary achievement. Their vocabulary has been found to be far more limited for their intelligence than that of children living under normal home conditions.

Intelligence Tests are also used for determining whether a child has mental abilities so low as to be unable to benefit from the education provided at the ordinary primary or secondary school. Children in the past were certified as "Mentally Deficient" by school medical officers. In the future, qualified psychologists who have specialist training will help in this work. Children found to have a low Intelligence Quotient are sent to Special Schools, colloquially known as "Silly Schools". These children, however, are trained, so that when they leave school they can take their place in society. This being the objective of the Special Schools, it would be better for those children of low I.Q., who show no behaviour problems, to remain in the normal school. They should, however, be relegated to a class for special methods of tuition. Only children who cannot fit in with the games and social life of the school should be segregated.

In the past, when the school-leaving age was 14 years, such a special class had its objections, because M.D. children stayed at school until they were 16. With

the extension of the school-leaving age to 15, however, this objection does not hold.

In my class, one boy was certified M.D. and recommended for admission to a Special School, but the parents appealed on the grounds that the boy fitted in with other children of the school and the district. The appeal was allowed and the boy is now working happily in the class.

The stress on the use of Intelligence Tests has so far been on the side of the backward child, with whom we are primarily concerned in this book. They can also be used for the bright child.

During the Christmas holiday of 1947, a friend, a solicitor by profession, approached me regarding his daughter. Her high school was closing down and he wished her to obtain entrance to a girls' public school, for which the competition was great. While her school reported well on her standard of English, History and Geography, her Arithmetic, it seemed, was hopeless. There were eight weeks to go to the entrance examination and the parents wished to know if by coaching in Arithmetic, she might raise her standard sufficiently to pass the examination. I first administered the Binet Intelligence Tests, and found that the girl, whose age from birth was 11½ years, had a Mental Age of 16.4 years, giving an Intelligence Quotient of 143. She was therefore a bright girl. In the vocabulary test she reached 18 years of age-level and in Burt's Reading Test, which only goes to 15 years, she attained a mark of 14.9 years. She had read *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *David Copperfield*, *Master of Ballantrae* and *Treasure Island*, *Peter Pan* and other good works of English literature. In Arithmetic, her achievement was 9.6 years, that is, she was two years backward. But in Binet Tests she showed no arithmetical deficiency as regards number or reasoning.

In the circumstances it seemed possible that with inten-

sive coaching, especially as part of the time was in the holiday, she could improve on her arithmetic level. This estimate, based on scientifically devised tests, was found correct, for after seven weeks of such tuition re-tests in Burt's Mental, Mechanical Arithmetic and Problems showed an average attainment of 12.1 years, a gain of 2.5 years. The girl passed her examination not only in English, but also in Arithmetic.

If this can be done with one child, then individual treatment of backward children arranged in small classes in schools should do much to decrease the backwardness now existing.

There are backward children who, judged by their intelligence, might be expected to benefit from a grammar school education. At the age of 11, all children take the Common Entrance Examination for secondary schools. The results decide their whole future. The children are classified according to ability and attainment. They then proceed to a senior, technical or grammar school. Once a child is placed in a school of a particular kind, it is seldom that he is transferred to another type of school.

Some children develop later than others, while some, backward educationally, can be expected to improve on their standard of work with special teaching. These children do not get the advantage of the Education Act. This Act allows secondary school for all types of children of the age of 11, to be gathered within one organised unit, known as the comprehensive high school.

The children in such a school would be classified according to ability, aptitude and standard of attainment. There would be parity of conditions for all children. As the pupils developed, they could be placed in that section of the school best suited for them.

In London, some experimental secondary schools have been established, but these do not cater for the grammar

school type of child. The grammar schools continue to exist as separate entities.

Middlesex County Council in setting up comprehensive high schools are taking advantage of the provisions of the Act to give genuine secondary education to children of the requisite age.

These high schools would be a great advantage to children from such schools as Middle Row. In admitting pupils to grammar schools, it is possible that in filling places, applicants may be preferred from a superior social environment than that in which Middle Row children live. This means that children, already penalised in their living conditions, may be prevented from reaching that higher level of life to which their potentialities entitle them.

Child Guidance Clinics play their part in dealing with backward and problem children. They investigate cases referred to them, suggest and apply remedies. The clinics are medical institutions, being administered by psychiatrists. Among cases treated are the backward child, the delinquent, and sufferers from troubles such as enuresis, thumb-sucking and stammering.

Dr. William Moodie, Medical Director of the London Child Guidance Clinic, tells of a boy, 12 years of age, who was referred to him by the Probation Officer, for stealing after being put on probation for two years. Investigation showed the boy's reading level was that of a child of four; he lived in a very poor home; he was easily led; he had poor health and was attending hospital; his backwardness at school gave him a feeling of inferiority. The boy was given special coaching at the Clinic. After seven months his reading had improved to that of a child of eight years. This improvement gave the boy more self-confidence. There was no return of delinquency and encouraging reports were received from his school.

MENTAL PROCESSES

Dr. C. P. Blacker, L.C.C., estimates that from one to two per cent of the ordinary school population needs special help at a child guidance clinic every year.¹ In schools such as those of North Kensington, a far higher number require such help. More child guidance clinics in North Kensington and similar districts would be of great assistance to teachers in their very onerous task.

¹ Dr. C. P. Blacker, *Neurosis and the Mental Health Service*. (Oxford University Press.)

CHAPTER IV

TEACHING

“The experience gained through experimental (backward) classes should in the long run yield valuable suggestions for improving the education of normal or even bright children.”
(*L.C.C. Inspectors’ Report on Backwardness.*)

THE shortage of teachers must hamper the educational programme. Married women teachers who have left the profession might be tempted back if half-time work were offered them, and still more might return to full-time work if the principle of “equal pay” were put into practice. The importance should be stressed of the teacher being in sympathy with the children, understanding the causes which lead to their backwardness. It is advisable that lectures on the effects of social and economic conditions be given to students in training. The information gained would help them as teachers to a fuller understanding of the behaviour and development of their charges. In 1944, Mr. Magnay, then Director of Education of the City of Leicester, included the subject of Socio-Economic Causes of Backwardness in a course of lectures to teachers of backward children.

Sir Graham Savage, L.C.C. Education Officer, in welcoming to the London teaching service entrants from emergency training colleges, drew their attention to the work with backward children and to the scope which such teaching offered.

The task of a teacher of backward children is not only to “teach”. He must recognise that the activity of the learner is a necessary element in the process of learning. The teacher must be a guide, an encourager, a leader, a

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diagnostician, rather than an instructor, a ruler or a law-giver.¹

There are difficulties to be faced in staffing. Schools are not all equally attractive to the teacher. Middle Row Junior School had two vacancies which were advertised in the *L.C.C. Bulletin*. Only one application was received, that of a man already teaching in the school. I spent some time at Middle Row Infants' School observing methods of teaching reading. I asked why teachers were no longer attracted to this work and what could be done to make the work more attractive. The answer was spontaneous: "Reduce the size of the classes."

Some revision in the Burnham Scales of salaries for teachers is necessary to meet the special nature of the work of those who teach "Educationally Sub-normal Children". This term should not only cover the backward child who is of low intelligence, but also those children who, while of normal or superior intelligence, are educationally backward. Teachers in Special Schools receive two additional increments above the Burnham Scale. Teachers taking special classes of partially deaf or partially sighted children in ordinary schools are eligible for these additional increments. This concession should apply to teachers taking backward classes in primary or secondary schools.

USE OF THE PROJECT

The method of teaching these children, who are up to six years behind the average child, needs careful consideration and experiment. The Minister of Education, the Rt. Hon. George Tomlinson, said in West Wales in May, 1947: "The first thing you need in teachers is responsibility and freedom to experiment." The standard

¹ Dr. C. M. Fleming, *Social Psychology of Education*. (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd.)

of achievement must depend on methods used in the classroom. Professor Gray, in *The Nation's Intelligence* (Watts & Co.), says, "Our existing methods of teaching backward and bright children, and children of different temperaments, help to determine the intellectual efficiency of the population. . . . The more we know about the interests of children, and the more interesting we can make the things we teach them, the greater will be the return for our educational efforts."

The method used before the war, and which I am using today, is the project method linked up with the environment. I also found it useful during evacuation with ordinary children. At Taunton I built up such a project based on the local industry of brickmaking and in a Somerset village school on milk. A project taken with Class 2B was the story of books, to interest the boys in learning to read.

The aims of this method are to prepare the children for a useful and satisfying life. The oral or lecture type of lesson is being replaced by more active participation of the boys. School visits are arranged, the boys are asked to draw their impressions after a visit, and a word or two of description printed under the picture helps in learning new words. The "project method" breaks down the time-table which cuts up the day with sharp divisions based on subjects. Dealing with the project on lines of historical development makes it unnecessary to have subjects like History, Geography and Science separately enumerated.

School is linked up with life outside; for instance, a postman has been to the class and described his work.

Professor Langevin advocates this linking up in *La Pensée*, No. 1:

"We plead for unity between school and life, between reality and thought, matter and idea, general culture and pro-

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fessional training. We want an organic liaison between the school and its surroundings (and not sporadic contacts in the guise of class expeditions and isolated school visits to factories or depots). The school should unite with nature and with life, often leaving the walls of the classroom to return laden with experience and with observations, to enrich itself with reflection and meditation, to learn how to record the expression and the representation of things seen, lived or felt. It should feel itself constantly part and parcel of the outside world for which it is a preparation. Thus the child's field of vision will widen progressively along with his discovery of his immediate world. This will enable him to find his place there, as well as in ever-widening circle. He will follow thus the true way of culture which goes from the near to the far, from the particular to the general, from the concrete to the abstract, from individuality to generality, from egocentric to altruistic interest. This is as true of his contact with men as it is of his contact with things."

JUNIOR SCHOOLS

Mr. D. R. Hardman, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education, addressed teachers at an educational course at Berkhamsted recently, as follows:

"The junior schools have far too long been the Cinderellas of the public system of education. . . . Owing to the concentration on the needs of children over 11, little new accommodation has been provided for them, their classes have been too large, and in the old days they had the shadow of the 11 plus examination hanging over them. Yet it was between the ages of 7-11 years, according to the White Paper on Educational Reform, that children's minds were nimble and receptive, their curiosity strong, their imagination fertile and their spirits high. Much could be done at this age to foster personalities."

Mr. Hardman said that the view set out in a Committee report on Primary Schools in 1931 that children were required to spend too much time in "unnatural sedentary posture" and that schools should think of junior education in terms of activity and experience, rather than knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored, although generally approved, was not extensively practised. The gap between theory and practice was partly due to cramped conditions, but those teachers who made the change found that children, allowed freedom of choice in their work and encouraged to research and experiment, were not only livelier, but worked much harder.

EDUCATIONAL VISITS

Learning occurs largely through concrete experiences that are part of real life. Going on excursions helps to provide such experiences.

Visits help the child to learn about his environment. They stimulate work inside school through enabling him to express in various ways what he has observed and to enter upon his work with greater enthusiasm; and they lead to good habits outside school by suggesting ways and means of spending free time.

These visits and activities also help to overcome the extreme backwardness in reading. Professor F. J. Schonell points out that environment factors, language, background and experience, trips, visits, books, pictures, stories told and questions answered, lead to reading ability, provide language background and increase vocabulary. It is easier to read words frequently used and to understand reading based on one's own activities.¹

In connection with their class lessons the boys have this year visited the National Book League's Exhibition

¹ F. J. Schonell, *The Psychology and Teaching of Reading*, (Oliver & Boyd, Ltd.)

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of Children's Books of Days Gone By; the local library; an exhibition at the L.C.C. Education Library called "From MS. to Printed Book"; and the Paddington Postal Sorting Office. On the occasion of the visit to the Sorting Office, the staff generously gave the boys tea and buns from their own rations.

While crossing Westminster Bridge to get to County Hall, one boy, seeing a tram, called out, "What a funny bus!"

Other school visits paid by my school-children included a trip to Paddington Station, when the Superintendent presented each child with a Centenary Souvenir in the form of an Illustrated History of the Great Western Railway. They went to the premises of the National Cash Register Co. Ltd., Marylebone Road, where the reception from the Sales Manager was very cordial. The boys were regaled with tea and cakes, were shown round the vast building, had a special cinema display, and were given some literature on cash-registers. The outstanding new experience gained on this visit was going up in a lift to the top of the building. It literally took their breath away. To get to lower floors, they preferred the stairs. Another new sensation felt by them was walking on a carpet. Their expressions and surprised downward looks caused the guide to remark: "They've never walked on a carpet before." This visit also gave the boys an insight into the organisation and running of a factory, and they could thus link up school with the work of men and women in the community.

Other outings undertaken were to the British Museum, where a guide-lecturer explained the history of the alphabet and the story of books; and to the London Museum, where they had a talk on the development of household utensils. On the way to this museum a halt was called to watch the changing of the Guard outside Buckingham Palace. A boy of 11, who was intently watching a motion-

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less soldier for a time, suddenly exclaimed: "Is he real?"

On another occasion, the Chairman of Managers, Mrs. Alice Jarrett, herself a former pupil of the school, arranged to take the class by motor coach to the farm of the London Co-operative Society at Ongar. The Society provided coaches and packed lunch and tea. A most instructive day was spent observing animal husbandry and farming.

These visits are encouraged not only by the L.C.C., but also by the Ministry of Education. His Majesty's Inspector for the district was informed of the visit to the Sorting Office. She replied, "Thank you for letting me know about your arrangement to take a class to the Paddington Postmen's Office. It should be a most interesting visit and I hope the children will enjoy it and profit from it."

The L.C.C., in July, 1947, revised their regulations on school visits. Further stress is laid upon such visits, but film shows are excluded. For junior pupils the Council allow a shilling for fares for each child over 10 years of age on the school roll for the educational year ending at Easter. Secondary school pupils are allowed 2s. for every child on roll.

The amount allowed Middle Row Junior School on the 1s. basis is about £3 to £3 10s. for the year. This amount has been exhausted for 1947-8 and no visits involving fares can be undertaken in the Easter term of 1948. In view of the recognised importance of visits in education, particularly to such children as attend this school, the allowance should be increased to at any rate 2s. per head for each child attending the junior school. Journeys to music festivals, concerts and plays should not be debited against the allowance for school visits.

OPEN-AIR ACTIVITIES

The backward boy, and more so, the difficult boy, has to be considered not only from the mental angle but also

from the physical. A judicious blending of mental and physical activities is essential for the boys to make satisfactory all-round development and also to secure some stability in behaviour. Again quoting the L.C.C. Inspectors: "In view of the general beneficial effects of open-air schooling on health and attendance, it would be advantageous if backward children spent a greater proportion of their time in physical and other activities in the open air." When conditions permit, drill and games of Class 2B are taken in the playground. Conditions, however, were against us in the first months of 1947. Hard weather, removal of air-raid shelters and re-surfacing of the playground decreased the amount of time usually spent out-of-doors.

Arrangements have been made for the boys to play games in a recreation ground. The love of these boys for football is shown by a story about Tony. His teacher said of him that he deliberately set out to give her trouble, hoping that he might be transferred to Class 2B, where he knew he would get a game of football or cricket. If such were his intentions, his method was successful, for he was so transferred and is no longer troublesome.

A special swimming session was arranged for the class. While all boys wanted to attend, lack of swimming trunks proved an obstacle. Many of the boys had none. We overcame this in a number of ways. The headmaster of the secondary boys' school had some for sale, made of bleached blackout curtains; some boys wore sisters' knickers; others cut down pairs of shorts. In the end all were fitted up with something to cover their bodies. Monday morning—swimming morning—was very popular. New L.C.C. regulations make it possible for clothes for games and bathing requisites to be provided on loan to children.

In summer, cricket is played in the playground. Actu-

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ally, it is cricket modified. Locally the game is called "Tip a Logger" or "Hit and Run". The game as played is not likely to develop County cricketers. As in football, the boys and the game would benefit if it could be played on a full-size pitch where the ball could be well and truly hit without fear of breaking someone's windows.

TELLING THE TIME

In our present-day community, to be able to tell the time is taken for granted. The class was tested in telling the time. Out of 31 boys only six could do so. Some said they told the time according to the wireless items, others by the factory sirens. A weakness in the boys' knowledge thus discovered, steps were taken to overcome the deficiency. Apart from formal lessons with a clock face, the story of telling the time through the ages was told and a visit took place to the Science Museum, South Kensington, where a lecture was given on the measurement of time. The exhibits were pointed out and described to the children.

Charlie was one of the boys who could not tell the time. His father is an engine-driver, his brother a fireman on the railway, and he wants to be a fireman, too. When it was explained to him how essential it was for a railway worker to tell the time he soon learnt how to do so.

This method to arouse interest did not work quite so well with Henry. He devotes his spare time helping to care for horses, and boasts that he can ride any horse. I asked him how he could look after horses if he could not tell the time; he would not know when to feed them. His reply was, "I don't need to tell the time. All I do is to fill the nose-bag when it is empty."

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Not only are first-hand experiences helpful, but films in school, both movie films and strip films, can be

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great educational factors. The L.C.C. are securing new projectors. The Council should be asked to recognise the little opportunity that Middle Row children have for first-hand experiences, and to place the school on a priority list for one of these projectors. It is also necessary to arrange for school halls or rooms to be fitted with black-out blinds. When a film show for the children was being organised, it was found that the nearest school so fitted was over a mile away.

Since the summer of 1948, a large room in the school has been fitted with these blinds.

Pictures relating to the current project in class can be collected, and other visual aids introduced to help the backward child to build up a knowledge of facts and to get a clear conception of the meaning of words and phrases.

TEACHING READING

In view of the extreme backwardness of the boys in reading, and the important place that reading takes in a civilised community, special methods of a practical nature have been devised to stimulate interest in learning to read. Word-matching cards were prepared and made by the boys themselves. Each card consists of a picture and a word describing it underneath. Then, on separate strips of card, the words only are printed.

The aim is for the boys to recognise the words without the help of the pictures. The pictures were based on the interests of the children, viz., football, cricket, swimming, and so on. There are two boys who cannot read but who draw and copy well. These two boys made several sets of these cards. Further sets were made, consisting of phrases or short sentences incorporating easy basic words. The boys work in pairs, and when they know a set of words they are heard by the teacher, who records the

progress. The children write the words they have learnt in a notebook.

This method is looked upon as a game and the boys are roused out of the feeling of lethargy and discouragement as they learn to read. Stephen brought to school a set of 13 word-matching cards he had made with the help of his mother. He is $4\frac{1}{2}$ years behind in reading. He read all the words he had printed. The headmaster's comment on hearing him was, "Wonders will never cease." It was Stephen, too, who during the visit to Kensington Public Library, asked the librarian for a book on modelling and sculpture. He said, "I like modelling since I saw some sculpture and a book about sculpture in the house where my Mum does housework."

The phonic method is also used, the children being taught in groups to break up the words into sounds and then link up the sounds into words. Sam found that this method helped him. He had purchased a set of the alphabet made of wood for printing purposes. He brought to school a piece of paper covered with words printed with the set. He read them to the headmaster, who exclaimed, "To think I have spent so many lessons teaching him to read the word 'of'."

BOOKS

It is in applying the third stage, reading from graded books, that we come to grief. Such books for infant readers as are now available are in a dilapidated condition, and books that might be more suitable for older boys are out of print. The L.C.C. are aware of this shortage. At a Council meeting held on 27th April, 1944, it was pointed out that children were using books that were "torn, dirty and tattered". The reason given for this shortage is lack of paper. The L.C.C. member, Mr T. Magnus Wechsler, went on to say: "The teaching of certain subjects is com-

pletely held up. They are having to compete with the football coupons, race cards, blood-and-thunders and the semi-pornographic literature with which London is littered today."

The printing of reading aids, such as word-matching cards for backward readers and special books for the older slow readers should be the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and the Education Authorities in these days of book shortage. Unless these books are forthcoming there will be a serious increase in illiteracy. If we want a literate people we must have the ammunition to secure it, and the best ammunition is books.

In Middle Row Junior School, a school library is to be established, based on the recommendations of the L.C.C. Report (1st August, 1946). Of books, it says:

"Books are one of the main sources of knowledge and recreation, and as such are among the chief instruments of education. . . . A child needs to grow up in an environment where he learns to use books not only as tools, to be thrown aside when lessons are done, but rather as one of his chief sources of pleasure."

The report recommends that "primary schools shall have a room set aside for a library, if possible, or at least should have equipment for book corners and classroom libraries." The report concludes that the provision of school libraries "should be faced as one of the first steps in carrying out the requirements of the new Education Act for a better, fuller and more cultural education for pupils of all types."

Such a library is being formed in the spare room of the school. The Managers have contributed to a Memorial Fund in memory of Miss Webster, who for many years was Honorary Secretary of the School Care Committee.

This Fund is to be spent on books as the beginning of a school library.

Cicero said, "To add a library to a house is to give that house a soul." Children should be encouraged to build up their own personal library at home. In years gone by, the school prize was often the beginning of such a library. The L.C.C. decided at its March, 1948, meeting to reintroduce the prize scheme. Owing to the book shortage, it may be necessary to offer children gifts other than books as prizes. The 10th International Conference on Public Education, held under the auspices of UNESCO and the International Bureau of Education, in Geneva in December, 1946, agreed upon the following as one of their recommendations: "That school books become the property of the pupils in order to provide them with the nucleus of a small personal library."

Small special classes for backward children with individual methods of teaching justify themselves. Two of my school children, a boy and a girl, after such teaching, were promoted to the top class of the school. They sat for the Common Entrance Examination, qualifying for admission to secondary schools of different types in January, 1948. As a result of the examination the children are placed into categories A to E. The A's usually go to grammar schools; the B's go to grammar, technical or central schools; the others to a secondary senior school. Of the two children mentioned above, both obtained a B grading. The girl gained admission to a grammar school but not the boy.

Before the War, the Board of Education, the London County Council and other education authorities recognised the existence of the problem of backwardness, and took steps to deal with this problem. The War stopped the programmes evolved. Now that some years have elapsed since hostilities ceased, the matter should be

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reopened, and treatment be reintroduced on organised lines. Discussions might be instituted among teachers, the medical staff, attendance officers and others concerned with the physical and mental development of backward children.

CHAPTER V

NURSERY SCHOOLS

“If we are to be able to get the best secondary education in this country we must first have the best nursery and primary education. The standard of education can only be improved by concentration on improving the education at younger ages. The whole standard of primary education must be raised throughout the schools of the country.” (Mr. I. J. Hayward, L.C.C.)

CLOSELY linked up with backwardness is the pre-school life of children. The kind and state of home in which they live, the accessibility of parks and open spaces in which they can play, the pressure of work on the mother, the number of other children in the family, all help to determine whether the child, on reaching school age, will be physically and mentally ready to profit by the education provided in the primary school.

The age range of my 1947 class at the beginning of the war was from one and a half years of age to about four years. Only two of them attended a nursery school.

At the time of the investigation, the average number of children per family of the children in my class was 5.6. This means that in many families there are at the same time two or more under school age. The mother, who has to fend for a large family and has no domestic help, has a task far more onerous than any factory worker. Not only has she to get the breadwinners off to work, but the children have to be fed and got ready for school. The rooms have to be cleaned. Queuing for food takes up a good part of the day, and often the under-fives are left to their own devices until mother has performed other

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essential duties. Small children have nowhere to play in the limited accommodation at home, and so out they go into the street, where the gutters and the bombed houses claim them. One mother remarked to me, "I have another child coming, and as the nursery class at the school is full, my other little ones have only the street to play in."

At Middle Row School there is one nursery class. It is a joy to see the happy, clean little faces playing together and behaving as members of a community. Their dinner is taken under supervision and they learn to behave in a social manner. Mothers would be glad to send children, who at present are excluded for lack of room. Another nursery class is urgently needed and there is certainly accommodation in the school for such a class and possibly more than one.

One mother wrote to a daily newspaper as follows:

"As a mother of three small children, with some experience of day-nurseries, I would like to say that in many cases a child will flourish all the better from being away from the 'personal' care of a harassed, overworked mother for some time during the day, and being instead under the trained care of someone whose sole duty it is to look after him.

"He will also have the advantage of surroundings designed for his size and use and will be able to play and make as much noise as he likes. The risk of illness is far less than in overcrowded, stuffy houses and rooms, or in the shopping queues with mother on cold mornings."

Margaret and Rachel Macmillan were the first to impress upon the public the need for the medical, educational and social welfare of children under five. They showed by establishing the first open-air nursery school at Deptford, the improvement in the health and mental development of young children from poor homes when they were allowed open-air activity in the garden; association with

children of the same mental ability; good food and afternoon rest.

Dr. Davies, former Director of Education for Willesden, addressed a conference at County Hall in 1936 on the education of children under seven. He remarked:

"All will agree that the children in most urgent need of provision are those from homes where both parents follow some kind of employment. But the number of children in this category forms but a small proportion of the elementary school population. The vast majority of mothers are solely employed as their own housekeepers, saddled with the onerous and exacting task of performing menial tasks in their own homes. The number who have any form of domestic help is negligible. Is some provision for the care and education of the children of pre-school age from the ordinary servantless home a necessity? To me the answer is obvious. Can anyone contend that the harassed housewife, who is responsible for the cleaning, cooking, washing, etc., has any time to devote to the scientific training and upbringing of her young children? The mother in the tenement, the flat, or the ordinary dwelling-house in our large towns and cities, however deep-rooted her maternal instinct, and however ardent her love for her child, finds it as difficult to organise a healthy, happy and regular life, in the absence of light, sunshine, space, fresh air and the requisite apparatus and amenities for her children of pre-school age as she would to make provision for their education from five to fourteen.

"But should not the basis be even wider than this? These are the days of small families. The only child is a frequent phenomenon, and is a creature for whom I have the deepest sympathy. Children were never intended for solitary confinement with adults, but should have an opportunity of enjoying a community life, sharing and enjoying with others the good things provided for them."

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Other arguments can be put forward in favour of the general establishment of nursery schools. The overcrowding survey of 1935 showed that 341,554 dwellings in England and Wales were overcrowded, even where a kitchen or living-room was considered as available for sleeping. If, however, such room were not included for sleeping accommodation in the survey, then 853,119 families would be considered as living in overcrowded conditions. Such homes are certainly unsuitable for rearing children, and the immediate provision of nursery schools is, therefore, a necessity. But nursery schools are no substitute for bad home conditions, and are not an alternative to a progressive housing policy.

The danger of the street with its fast-moving traffic, and of long, de-restricted roads around London cannot be over-emphasised. In 1947, there were 286 child walkers under the age of five killed on the roads. This total—large as it is—was a big drop on previous years. For the years 1944, 1945 and 1946, the figures were 397, 395 and 346. And there is no reason to suppose that the drop is anything more than temporary, under present conditions.

That children, and girls in particular, need a full diet in infancy, and that they are only likely to get it if they attend a nursery school, is emphasised by Dr. McGonigle, Medical Officer, Stockton-on-Tees. In his report for 1933 he says: "It is true that actual starvation is almost unknown in England, but a large percentage of the population suffers from a partial starvation of certain elements of an optimum dietary. Every child who has carious teeth has suffered from a shortage of certain mineral and vitamin constituents of an optimum diet. Every woman who has suffered a difficult childbirth as a result of rachitic deformity of the pelvis has at some period of her childhood been starved."

The nursery school, besides providing the children

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with well-balanced meals, fosters in them a taste for, and enjoyment of, the right kinds of food.

In view of the beneficial and lasting effects of nursery schools, the ban on the building of such schools by the Government on the grounds of economy is to be deplored. This is false economy, because the race not only suffers physically and mentally, but many mothers, who would willingly go to work during this period of crisis, cannot do so with young children on their hands.

CHAPTER VI

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

“There is . . . a psychological or physical constitution that results in poor progress being associated with frequent absence, so much so that frequent short spells of absence are related with educational retardation more than are less frequent longer spells of much greater duration.” (F. Sandon, *British Journal of Psychology*, 1938.)

Boys of the present junior school age have lost much educational time owing to the closing or disorganisation of the London schools during the war. It is therefore of the greatest importance that these children attend school regularly in order that such loss be made good. No progress can be made without continuity in the process of learning.

It is in the infants' school that young children are taught reading and number concepts. The teachers in that department are specially trained for such work and it is these essential foundations which the children in Class 2B as a result of the war have missed. This leeway has now to be made up in the junior school, but the teacher is hampered by the irregularity of attendance in the class.

The L.C.C. conducted an experiment for six months, commencing October 7th, 1946, in school attendance. Six schools in each division were chosen. Middle Row School was selected as one of the six. The head teacher was responsible, in place of the school inquiry officer, for enforcement of attendance. The inquiry officer still visited special cases and dealt with those necessitating legal action. Teachers kept records of every absence and

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indicated by an agreed letter the reason for such absence. Records of Class 2B for 27 weeks show the following:

Out of a possible attendance of 250 sessions, the average attendance per boy was 205.6 sessions, that is a percentage of 84.5. In effect this means that on an average each boy was absent one day in five.

The attendance of the boys in my pre-war class at Barlby Road School was 86.4 per cent for 1936.

The abnormally bad weather in early 1947 and the fuel crisis were doubtless factors contributing to the low attendance.

The number of spells of absence, irrespective of duration, were as follows during the 27 weeks:

| <i>Spells of Absence</i> | <i>No. of Cases</i> |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 0-4 | 8 |
| 5-9 | 11 |
| 10-14 | 6 |
| 15-19 | 1 |
| 20 or more | 5 |
| Total .. | 31 |

Here is a table showing the number of sessions of absences and the number of boys concerned:

| <i>Sessions absent out of 250</i> | <i>No. of Cases</i> | <i>Sessions absent out of 250</i> | <i>No. of Cases</i> |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 0-10 | 2 | 51-70 | 3 |
| 11-20 | 8 | 71-80 | 1 |
| 21-30 | 7 | 81-90 | 1 |
| 31-40 | 4 | 201 | 1 |
| 41-50 | 1 | | |

These figures look grim and a teacher who is trying to

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overcome the educational disturbances and setbacks of the war years and the unsettled period thereafter must be an optimist if he hopes to achieve any startling success.

Before, however, one can tackle the absences, one must know the reasons for their occurrence. The following relate to the totals for the class:

| <i>Reason</i> | <i>No. of Spells</i> | <i>No. of Sessions</i> |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Illness—personal | 125 | 599 |
| Illness—other members of family | 21 | 63 |
| Hospital consultations | 6 | 7 |
| Infectious illness or contact .. | 3 | 44 |
| Errands | 31 | 46 |
| Holidays | 3 | 38 |
| Care of baby | 1 | 10 |
| Short of clothing | 5 | 13 |
| re Juvenile delinquency | 3 | 5 |
| Truanting | 2 | 9 |
| Pre-week-end and before or immediately following a holiday .. | — | 106 |

It should be pointed out that during the period covered a printed form was sent to parents in order to get the reason for each absence. Questionable cases were visited by the inquiry officer and the headmaster checked the special absentee register each week.

A number of absences were unaccounted for. Other reasons were:

- (a) to get birth certificates;
- (b) did not know when school reopened—different holidays for secondary department using same building;
- (c) tired after going to theatre;
- (d) cannot get up day after he goes to the pictures;

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- (e) mother expecting a baby;
- (f) to buy clothes;
- (g) queuing for coke during cold spell;
- (h) looking after shop.

Ill-health is the most frequent cause of absences. The exceptional cold spell was a factor, but it will be seen from an examination of their home lives and of the war period that there are other contributory causes which prevent the children from being healthy. The establishment of a medical clinic in the school itself has reduced time wastage, as compared with sending children to an outside clinic.

Suggestions for improving the health of the children are given in other chapters. The frequency of keeping children at home to go on errands, to buy clothing, and before week-ends could be dealt with by addressing the parents on the importance of regular attendance, emphasising how short breaks upset the educational sequence, particularly with backward children.

There is little truanting, or "opping the wag", to use a homely phrase. Reference should be made to Peter. While his mother was bedridden, he stayed at home to help. He cooked meals, did the shopping and cleared up the place. He spent only one day in five at school during the 27 weeks. Domestic help provided by the local authority would have obviated the boy's absence from school.

Attempts to reduce the pre-week-end absences were made. School visits in connection with the class project were limited to 20 children. Those who had stayed away on Friday afternoons preceding the visit were not allowed to take part in the outings. This was an effective remedy. The Friday attendance has remained steady since the application of the rule.

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There is need in a school like Middle Row for a welfare officer to cover the work of the school inquiry officer and of the Welfare Committee. Among the duties would be the immediate visitation of special absentees and the investigation of the causes. In cases where domestic assistance is needed, such assistance should be given, and other steps could be recommended leading to improved conditions for the children in their homes and in school. In Leicestershire, the attendance officers are called "School Attendance and Welfare Officers" and their description is in accordance with their duties.

Closely linked up with backwardness in the junior school is the attendance of the children in the infants' department. Miss G. Rawlings, B.A., conducted an investigation among the children of Bradford. She reports:

"It is during the infant school years that the largest consecutive periods of illness usually occur—that is to say, these absences occur just when the child should normally be covering the ground-work of the fundamental subjects—reading and number. If such absence occurs, individual help from the teacher is necessary to make up the points missed, otherwise hopeless confusion may set in and a 'backward case' be formed."

Open-air teaching and activities also tend to reduce absenteeism and improve the standard of work. Dr. A. M. Whipple, M.A., D.Sc., Director of Education for the City of Nottingham, conducted an experiment in a park. Four open-air classes were organised for normal, healthy children. He found that the attendance of such a normal class was 94 per cent for the year, while the school of which the four classes formed a part reached an attendance of 90 per cent under indoor conditions. Scholastic results improved, and, in the case of the backward children,

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the better their health became, the less was their educational retardation.

THE CHILDREN'S CLOTHES

Among the reasons for absence listed above occurs that of shortage of clothing. A development since 1937 has been the recognition of the relationship between the clothing of a child and his school work. Section 51 of the Education Act of 1944 provides that where it appears to the local education authority that a pupil is unable, by reason of the inadequacy of his clothing, to take full advantage of the education provided, the authority may provide him with such clothing as is necessary to ensure that he is sufficiently clad while a pupil at the school.

In 1937, I noted the bad condition of the footwear of the children. Their inferior clothes were also observed when the children were prepared for evacuation in 1939.

An inspection of the boys in February, 1947, showed that the boys generally were well clothed and shod. They were warmly dressed, garments were clean, but many a button was missing from coats. Two boys belonged to the school Boot Club. Three boys wore shoes that took water, but two of these stated they had a spare pair. Three had no overcoat or mac. Peter stayed away in April as the tally man had not called and he had no trousers or boots to wear. By December, 1947, the clothing position had deteriorated. Out of 28 children examined, three wore plimsolls, unsuitable for that time of the year, the shoes of seven children needed repair, the shoes of two children were not fit for wear or repair. The clothes worn by the children at this time reflect the worsening conditions at home. These resulted from increased unemployment in some families, and decrease in pay due to loss of overtime in others.

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The L.C.C. has decided to administer the Clothing Section of the Education Act and has drawn up a scheme for the purpose. Care Committees will operate the scheme through the schools and may request repayment, by instalments if necessary, of the cost to the Council of the clothing.

A new Education Bill was published in February, 1948, amending and clarifying the 1944 Act. Clause 5 of the Bill accords considerable latitude in securing or waiving repayment from parents where hardship may be caused.

Parents should be informed of this arrangement, so that they can take advantage of the opportunity to have their children well-clothed, even under adverse economic conditions.

CHAPTER VII

THE DISTRICT AND THE SCHOOL

"The figures for backwardness can be compared with figures for social conditions obtaining in the different districts; and, if plotted in the form of a map, can be compared with a map of poverty, such as that published by Charles Booth towards the end of last century. On placing the two side by side, a remarkable correspondence leaps to the eye. Where Charles Booth blackened his streets to show the haunts of the criminal, or tinted them blue to mark the hovels of the poor, there our map also displays the darker shades and reveals the largest numbers of backward boys and girls. Such a plan of the country shows at once where special provision is most urgently needed, and suggests a possible cause." (Sir Cyril Burt, *The Subnormal Mind*. Oxford University Press.)

PEOPLE who know Kensington are aware of the extraordinary range of accommodation of its inhabitants. One passes from the spacious, palatial southern wards to the miserable, undecorated, overcrowded houses of the squalid northern sections.

OVERCROWDING IN 1933

The Kensington Borough Council declared Southam Street—a turning parallel to Kensal Road—an Improvement Area under the Housing Act of 1930. The houses were built round about 1860 for single-family occupation; but in 1933 almost every room, according to the Council's report, was being used both for living and sleeping purposes. Furthermore, the dwellings were fast deteriorating on account of the tremendous amount of wear and tear. Disrepair and sanitary defects were common. A parti-

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cularly unsatisfactory feature was the bad condition of basement rooms which were dark and damp, lacking air space and proper ventilation.

The report described as a black spot the area covered by the Golborne Ward. The average number of separate families per house was over four. The water closet accommodation was about one convenience to every 12 persons and was usually found in the rear yard at basement level. This meant that all the occupiers, except basement tenants, had to descend one, two or three flights of unlighted stairs by night or by day to reach the lavatory.

In every house there was one sink in the basement wash-house for the common use of all families. The only other water supply was usually a tap on one of the landings. Indeed, to quote the report: "The people in this area enjoyed very limited domestic comforts."

THE SITE TODAY

The district around the school is an island site known as Kensal New Town, being bounded on the south by the main railway line to Paddington, and on the north by the Grand Junction Canal. Entry from Ladbroke Grove is through Kensal Road and also down a few steps through a gap in some dwellings, called the "Hole in the Wall", opposite the famous modern Kensal House Flats. Kensal Road is five-eighths of a mile long to the eastern boundary of Kensal New Town. Leading from Harrow Road across the Canal is an old toll footbridge—"Ha'penny Steps".

Anyone who knows this part of London can recognise it by the smells. It is the home of the bag-wash and other laundries, with the pervading odour of boiling clothes. When the wind is from the west you notice the smells of the gas-works behind Kensal House, while, in Kensal

Road, old rags and clothes give out their musty odours; there, also, you get the acrid smells of chemicals from the factories. If you enter the district through the "Hole in the Wall" you are greeted by smells rising from the man-hole in the middle of the road.

Except for three modern blocks of flats at the western end, the houses are mainly of three floors. They looked drab enough in 1939. Add the further dilapidation caused by six years of war and some idea can be had of the low standard of repair of the property. Gaps in the rows of houses, as well as houses slowly disintegrating as a result of bombing and neglect, not only add to the ugliness of the scene, but also lead the children into delinquency and danger. However, the basements are no longer used for living purposes and are either shuttered or wired up.

Apart from rent receipts, landlords are no longer interested in their property, for this area has been scheduled as an industrial area under the County of London Plan. There is no plan for an orderly removal of the people; just a policy of drift. The local authorities hope that in the course of time the inhabitants, like old soldiers, will just fade away.

The district should be rebuilt in a planned manner under the powers of the local authorities, the London County Council and the Kensington Borough Council. Modern factories could be erected and let out in large and small units. The present modern dwellings and school would remain and the people displaced could remove to adjoining areas, where flats are under construction or contemplated.

Such flats should have labour-saving devices, including electric light and points, constant hot water, lifts, provision for washing and drying clothes, central heating, refrigerators and mechanical garbage removers.

THE DISTRICT AND THE SCHOOL

Even the pavements speak a tale of poverty, as those who have trodden Middle Row and Kensal Road will testify. The bomb damage in Kensal New Town has been left for boys to break up still further. Dangerous to life and limb, these bomb-damaged premises are also easy objectives for pilfering and wanton damage. And the boy who engages in such practices becomes a "delinquent".

Apart from the school playground, there is no open space available for healthy activity and recreation. Signs, however, of organised cleaning up of bombed premises are now apparent. Large, cleared sites would make temporary playgrounds for children.

MIDDLE ROW SCHOOL

Middle Row School is one of the best buildings in the district, consisting of a bungalow section for infants, a four-floor building for a primary mixed department and a secondary boys' department. There is a separate wing for the teaching of metal and woodwork. Some rooms are now used as a dining centre. The class-rooms are spacious and the corridors and staircases are wide. The top floor is used as a cookery centre by girls of a neighbouring school. Hot water is available and there is a bathroom with hot-shower facilities. The buildings are electrically lighted and centrally heated. They are also equipped for wireless lessons. In the infants' department a room is set apart as a school clinic with a nurse in daily attendance. The schoolkeeper and his staff maintain a high standard of cleanliness—not an easy task in this industrial area. The bomb damage to the school has been made good, and the large air-raid shelters, which occupied so much of the junior playground, were removed in May, 1947. This gives the children more space for games and physical exercise. The playground has been resurfaced. To give more scope for ball games, the wire netting was

partially replaced on the walls of the playground in December 1947. However, the school needs a general clean and brightening with a coat of paint. A start in decorating the building was made in December, 1948.

The L.C.C. has decided to rebuild the school as part of the London School Plan formulated in 1947. It is proposed to extend the acreage to two acres and provide a new building for 600 children when the secondary school for North Kensington has been established.

That the L.C.C. is fully alive to the importance of the building in any educational scheme is shown by the quotation in the "1947 Plan" from the Workers' Educational Association—Pamphlet No. 11: "The buildings are not merely the shell of the school; they are an educational factor in themselves—for good or ill; and they cannot be left out of account in any assessment of the quality of education, either on the practical side, or in its emotional and social influence."

As a result of the present national crisis, cuts in school buildings are proposed. Unless the Government's policy to save on school buildings is revised the 1947 plan will remain practically a dead letter for many years to come. Education is of such importance to the redevelopment of this country that the authorities concerned should be made aware of the false economy of cuts in building. The proposed secondary school in North Kensington should be proceeded with, on the grounds that those children of parents in the lowest economic class of society should have preferential treatment to make up for their poor home environment. The removal of the secondary school department from Middle Row to new premises would give all that extra space to the younger children and infants, and make adequate provision for children of nursery school age.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FAMILIES

“Internal discord and tension in family life lead to mental ill-effects and lead to retardation, instability and delinquency. It is through contact with their own parents in a home which is in wholesome relationship with a normal human community, that a boy or girl can best be guided to social maturity.” (Dr. C. M. Fleming, *Social Psychology of Education*. Kegan Paul Ltd.)

To understand the child, the teacher should know the family. As a rule, teachers meet parents at Parent-Teachers' Associations where these exist. At other times a parent may come up to school, usually with a complaint. In more recent days, parents are invited to see the head-teacher when the children are in their eleventh year and due to go to a secondary school. Generally speaking, the class teacher knows little about the family of his school children or their lives outside school. When there are difficulties, the parent sees the head-teacher or Care Committee representative.

OCCUPATIONS

The basis of family life turns on the occupation of the parents, particularly of the father, who in most cases is the sole bread-winner. The family income depends on parental occupation. Security of employment depends on the type of work performed. The greatest evil, second only to war, is unemployment.

Here are analyses of the occupations of the parents of the children in my class:

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(i) Father only employed:

| <i>Occupation</i> | <i>Number</i> |
|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Lorry driver | 6 |
| Engine driver | 1 |
| Bricklayer | 2 |
| Builder's labourer | 2 |
| Cement mixer | 1 |
| Engineer—metal-drums | 1 |
| Cook | 1 |
| Shop-keeper—second-hand clothes | 1 |
| Scrap collector | 1 |
| Night watchman | 1 |

(ii) Both parents employed:

| <i>Father's Occupation</i> | <i>Mother's Occupation</i> |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Engineer—ball-bearings | Domestic worker |
| Engineer—car engines | Domestic worker |
| Engineer—refrigerators | Domestic worker |
| Lorry driver | School cleaner |
| Stoker—gasworks | Domestic worker |
| Labourer | Laundry worker |
| Tarring roads | Cook |
| Scrap collector | Flower seller |
| Removals—pony and cart | Clerk |

(iii) Mother only earning:

| <i>Father's Condition</i> | <i>Mother's Occupation</i> |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Deserted family | Waitress |
| Dead | Bagmaker |

(iv) Other cases:

- (a) Father deserted family. Mother at home. Dependent on earnings of the children.
- (b) Father dead. Mother invalid. Dependent on child's aunts and uncles.
- (c) Father blind. Mother at home. Dependent on grants.

Michael's father was blinded by dust while employed at the gas works. Owing to the unprecedented severe weather four of the fathers were unemployed for short intervals at the time of the inquiry. This compares with seven unemployed in 1937.

The occupations show little variation from those of ten years ago, when out of 26 cases then investigated there were six drivers, six labourers and two collectors of scrap. No mention was made of "engineers" in 1937, while four at present are engaged in trades described as engineering—making ball-bearings, motor-car engines and refrigerators. Of mothers, 21 out of 31 were at home, while 17 out of 26 stayed at home in 1937. The occupations of the mothers show no great change.

It will be observed that these men and women are rendering fundamental service to their country and are indispensable in carrying on the day-to-day work of the nation.

Out of the 31 fathers, 20 served in the Army either in World War I or II, three served in the Navy, and one served in the Royal Air Force.

The older sisters and brothers of the children are also gainfully employed—13 work in factories; seven are clerks; five work for British Railways; four are builders' labourers; two are shop assistants; two serve in cafés; and two are domestic workers.

In gathering information for this investigation, the

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following stories emerged relating to the life and background of the families of the children concerned.

SOME FAMILY STORIES

Simon's father joined the Army in January, 1942. He left for India two months after, arriving at Bombay at the beginning of August. He was a lorry driver. They travelled to Assam, being 30 miles from the front. He speaks of the rats. The men were covered with nets at night to keep the rats off. Worse than the rats were the flies. Water had to be boiled before drinking. They enjoyed wild pig and stag shooting. But the Japs broke through and they were on the move again. They were boxed in for four weeks at Imphal, food being dropped by 'plane. He was promoted to Sergeant and placed in charge of stores to be issued to the 14th Army. He had two years of service in the wettest part of India. He reports having dysentery every four weeks and lost count of fever attacks. Since his return he has chronic dysentery.

* * *

Ronald's father was employed at a paint works. One day in 1936, while at work, he was walking across some planks between one roof and another. He saw a fellow-worker interfering with machinery, resulting in a crushed hand. He got excited, made a dash forward, and collapsed at the edge of the roof. He had a stroke. The mother was at the time three months pregnant with Ronald. The father had brain storms resulting from his collapse until just after Ronald's birth. He was in hospital during this period. At three months of age Ronald was placed in a day nursery, and the mother worked in a laundry for 40 hours per week to help the family's resources. The father still suffers from brain storms, and is paralysed in the right arm.

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Charlie's father was mending a pair of boots at the time of my visit. At first he was inclined to be uncommunicative. It seems that he thought I had come about Charlie going away for a summer holiday. He was opposed to the boy leaving home. He was afraid that Charlie would be weaned away from the family. This had happened with two of his older sons, who had been evacuated to Trowbridge and who now refused to come home.

* * *

Tom's mother had raised a large family—"all steps and stairs". Her husband was on and off in work. She was half-starved when having her children. They were offered the workhouse when down and out. She washed clothes at the wash-house at the public baths three times a week, as the family had only one set of garments each and they had to stay indoors until the clothes were dry.

* * *

There are marital difficulties in five homes. In two cases the father had deserted the family; in two other homes the parents lived in the same house but were not cohabiting; in another there had been estrangement. Here intervention by the Child Guidance Clinic, acting as a result of the son's delinquency, had brought about a reconciliation of the parents. In one case the mother was living with another man. Two boys were fatherless.

When parents quarrel, the effect on the children is catastrophic. Claud Mullins, a retired Metropolitan Magistrate, stresses the harm done to children by such parents. A high proportion become delinquent; they drift, are easily led into bad ways. Their pleasures are gambling, the automatic machines, and, later, sexual looseness. It is indeed a case of visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children. He stresses the importance of adequate care in the first seven years of a child's life. Day

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nurseries and nursery schools are of incalculable value in this area, and more and more are required.

CITIZENS OF THE FUTURE

The children of Kensal New Town will grow up to be the workers of the land, producing the wealth of the nation. They will be called upon to fight for their country in the event of war. They are therefore precious to the nation and should be treated and guarded as treasures.

For a period, an ex-Service man, waiting to go to a Teachers' Training College, assisted in my room. He was left in charge of the class for a time. He wrote about the boys as follows:

"The boys, after an initial struggle for mastery, were very good indeed. I am convinced that there are such things as bad environment, bad feeding, bad parents and bad teachers, but there is no such thing as a bad boy.

"My experience of the Army during six years has proved to me that the mischievous, high-spirited lads are the ones to have with you when the balloon goes up. And believing as I do that the main object of elementary education is the creation of good citizens, my experience at Middle Row School has convinced me that it is amongst these boys that the best material is to be found for the future."

CHAPTER IX

MOTHERS' HEALTH

"The character of the adult population of any country, its vigour, health, and working capacity, is determined by development and growth of the children, not only in their post-natal environment but also in the wombs of their mothers. The foetus lives, like a true parasite, regardless of the expense to the mother." (Miss M. Bruce Murray, *Medical Research Council Report* 81.)

THE behaviour and educational progress of the child in the classroom and out of it depends to some extent on the health of the mother during pregnancy, on the delivery, and on the physical condition of the mother after the child is born.

This investigation disclosed that three of the boys were prematurely born, one at seven months and two at eight months; in two cases instruments were used to help delivery, and one was a breech birth. The weight of this baby was three pounds at birth. David, who is backward in reading by $5\frac{1}{2}$ years, was an eight-months' baby and delivery was by instruments. To this day he finds it difficult to recognise letters by their sounds. There is the possibility that damage was done to the tissue of the brain, causing permanent injury. Psychologists attribute smudgy writing in school to instrument delivery.

To avoid difficult childbirth and possible brain damage, the future mother must be thought of when she herself is a child. A girl who, in infancy and early childhood, suffers from malnutrition, is liable to pelvic malformation. When she reaches womanhood, and with it marriage and pregnancy, it is found that in consequence of a weak

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pelvis, actual delivery of the child is extremely difficult. This is particularly the case with first-born children. Brain damage may result, and unless this is extremely mild leaves its mark on the mental abilities of the child. Investigation on children who are considered backward, dull, nervous or fidgety, will in many instances show such symptoms to be due to injury to the brain at birth.

Schwesinger, in *Heredity and Environment* (Macmillan & Co., Ltd.) enumerates the special congenital conditions which are popularly considered to leave deficient intelligence in their wake:

1. Extreme malnutrition of the mother during gestation, which results in depriving the embryo of needed elements from the maternal blood stream.
2. Severe, prolonged or wasting diseases such as tuberculosis, cancer, diabetes, and pellagra.
3. Toxic conditions, bacterial or alcoholic in origin, may affect the growing embryo; may affect the sperm cell before conception and result in defective offspring. Paternal alcoholism may lead to lowered intelligence factors.
4. Infections, especially syphilis, which attack the nervous system.
5. Under or over activity of ductless glands during pregnancy may affect the mental equipment of the offspring. Creatures born without adequate thyroid equipment are physically and mentally stunted. The condition sometimes responds favourably to early administration of thyroid.
6. Birth injuries, especially mechanical injury resulting from prolonged or difficult labour, as a result of pressure on the child's head, may arrest neural growth.
7. Psychic shocks or severe emotional experiences or strain of the mother, resulting in ductless glandular changes,

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the secretions of which are carried to the child through the maternal blood stream; or which, producing uterine contractions, may alter the blood supply to the foetus and may affect the mentality of the developing offspring.

Medical science is fast approaching a stage where these vitiating conditions can be largely controlled and therapy instituted either through prevention or early pre-natal treatment.

Sir John Boyd Orr states:

“For the health and physique of the rising generation, the health of women is more important than that of men. One of the common results of malnutrition is anaemia. It is much more common in women than in children and men. Its frequency in women is attributed to the extra demands for iron in women of child-bearing age. Diet is an important factor in preventing anaemia. About 80 per cent of the deciduous teeth of British children are imperfectly developed. Since this defect may be established before birth, it may be in part due to dietary deficiency in pregnancy.”¹

ECONOMICS OF CHILD-BIRTH

Dr. J. W. B. Douglas, a member of the Royal Commission on Population, was, during the years 1946–7, in charge of a nation-wide inquiry, by a Joint Committee of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynæcologists and the Population Investigation Committee, into the social and economic problems of child-bearing. He said in his 1946 lecture to the Eugenics Society: “All round, whatever angle one looks at it, the manual worker’s wife gets a much worse deal than those better off. The wife of the black-coated worker on weekly wages has a position somewhere in between.” Births at home were more fre-

¹ Sir John Orr, *Food, Health and Income*. (Macmillan & Co. Ltd.)

quent among manual workers, being one in two, while for black-coated workers they were one in five. Most better-off women had their own doctors, while manual workers had mainly midwives.

Dr. Douglas further stated: "You would expect, at any rate, equality of treatment in the same kind of institution, but in fact it is not so." The statistics in regard to time spent in hospital were that wives in the first class (professional) never left hospital before the tenth day, while the manual worker might have to leave five days after the birth.

"Throughout, the figures are very consistent in showing how far we are from achieving equality in care among women of different incomes in this country," said Dr. Douglas. "The aim of any national health service should be to achieve equality. We pay for inequality in ill-health of mothers. Over one-half of the working-class babies are delivered in homes, most of which are overcrowded and dirty, and this leads to the death of infants. A considerable extension of maternity services and education of mothers is essential."

The full report of this investigation was published in July, 1947. The reason given why so many wives of manual and agricultural workers gave birth to their children at home was that they could not get domestic help while in a maternity home and so they had to undertake domestic duties within a few days of delivery. Another startling fact disclosed was the connection between the financial status of the mothers and the relief of pain during childbirth. While about three-quarters of the wives of professional and salaried workers had analgesia or anæsthesia, this was the case with only one-third of manual workers' wives. This difference between the classes is even more marked if we take home confinements only into consideration. In the first class mentioned, 56

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per cent of mothers who have their babies at home have pain relief, but only 18 per cent of the wives of manual workers.

The cost of child-bearing is extremely high throughout the population. The outlay for a first baby of a professional worker was, in 1946, £57; of a black-coated worker, £44; of a manual worker, £36; and of an agricultural worker, £32. While expenditure is lower in the last two classes, it is scarcely proportional to the income differences between the groups. In all classes a good deal more is spent on baby clothes and equipment such as prams and cots than on medical treatment.¹

The new National Health Service Act should abolish most of these inequalities. As from the "appointed day"—July 5th, 1948—there should be a free service of nurses in the home, and dental service and medical care for all expectant mothers and children. From that date, whatever her income, every expectant mother is entitled to have free pre- and post-natal care, and no charge will be made for her confinement, whether at home or in hospital, or for the services of doctor, specialist or anæsthetist who will give relief from pain. Home helps are advocated, wages for such helps agreeing with those for hospital domestics.

While the intentions of the new Act are good, the White Paper on Cuts in Capital Investment has destroyed the most significant forward movement in preventing ill-health, namely, the creation of health centres. Without these centres, it is impossible to create a positive health service.

¹ *Maternity in Great Britain.* (Oxford University Press.)

CHAPTER X

FAMILY SIZE

“A high death rate means a high ‘damage rate’. The reduction of infant mortality is not an isolated phenomenon but a hint of vast improvement in the conditions of child life and in particular the incidence of sickness and ill-health during infancy and later life.” (Richard M. Titmuss, *Birth, Poverty and Wealth*. Hamish Hamilton & Co. Ltd.)

THE number of children in a family is important because the whole life of the family depends on family income in relation to family size. Apart from the Family Allowance, wages are paid according to the job and not according to the number of mouths to be fed. Sir John Orr, in *Food, Health and Income*, considers that the cost of keeping a child is as much as keeping an adult. He points out that a family with one child may be able to have a sufficient diet on an income of £6 per week. But with each increasing child the standard of living must deteriorate.

Here is an analysis of the number of children per family of Class 2B at the beginning of 1947:

| <i>No. of Children</i> | <i>No. of Families</i> |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | 1 |
| 2 | 2 |
| 3-5 | 13 |
| 6-8 | 11 |
| 9 and over | 4 |
| Total .. | 31 |

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The average number of children per family is 5.6, compared with the four per family of my 1937 investigations. This represents a large increase, and the repercussions are reflected in the low housing and nutritional conditions of the people.

The average of 5.6 children per family does not convey the actual number of children born to these families. In addition to those living a number died before they were a year old. The infantile mortality rate for Kensington dropped from 73 per 1,000 in 1936 to 41 per 1,000 in 1947. Over the same period the drop for the County of London was from 66 to 34; and for England and Wales, from 59 to 41 per 1,000. The statistics show that the poorer parts of the Borough have a higher mortality rate than the wealthier parts. In the Golborne Ward of North Kensington, where Kensal New Town is situated, the rate in 1936 was 94 per 1,000 against Brompton Ward, South Kensington, where it was 24 per 1,000. In the more recent reports, the figures are not analysed for the separate wards.

In 1936-8, infant death rates per 1,000 live births in Holland were 37; in England and Wales, 56; and in Scotland, 77. At the same time we may note that in a few parts of the world infant mortality has been reduced to below 25 deaths per 1,000 live births.

It is suggested that there are no medical, social or economic reasons why advanced communities should not achieve a rate of as low as 15, for the knowledge formerly lacking is now abundantly available. The saving of 100,000 lives of infants in the country every four years would be no small achievement.

Richard Titmuss concludes his study as follows:¹

"The lesson, the inescapable lesson, is that the infants of the poor are relatively worse off today than they were before

¹ R. M. Titmuss, *Birth, Poverty and Wealth*. (Hamish Hamilton & Co. Ltd.)

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the 1914 war. They are, in other words, dying in relatively greater numbers. . . . We are in fact further away from the goal of equalised health than we were thirty years ago."

Let us hope that the new National Health Service Act will give us that approach to equality in health for all mothers, fathers and children, so that those in the lower economic classes will have the same benefit of modern knowledge as applied to birth and subsequent living as the professional and upper classes.

THE EFFECTS OF FAMILY SIZE

The size of the family has an important effect upon the physical and mental health of the individual members of the family.

Dr. John Yudkin, M.D., reports in *The Lancet* of September 16th, 1944, on "Nutrition and Size of Family", as follows:

"If we compare the adequacy of the incomes in families of different size, we find a decreasing adequacy of income with increasing size of family. First, in the community as a whole, the average total family income is greater in smaller families, since small families are commoner in the more well-to-do sections of the community. Secondly, within any one socio-economic group, the money available per head decreases as the size of the family increases, since the total income bears little relation to the size of the family.

"Family allowances are rarely sufficient to supply the needs of the children: it is impossible adequately to feed and clothe a child for 5s. a week, an amount commonly advocated in recent discussions; even if social benefits worth 2s. 6d. and even more are added to this, as suggested in the parliamentary debate on the Beveridge Plan, 5s. a week is unlikely to suffice.

"In general terms, then, there will be a decrease in available income per head as a family increases in size. Thus

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families in which the available income is too low to provide an adequate diet are commonly those with a greater number of children, and reports such as that of the Birmingham Social Survey Committee (1942) bear this out.

“Allowing only for rent and rates, they showed that the proportion of families whose net income was below that necessary to provide minimal needs rose from 3 per cent in families with one child under 14 to 82 per cent in families with six or more children under 14.”

SIZE OF FAMILY AND INTELLIGENCE

Sir Cyril Burt prepared a survey on the relation between intelligence and fertility. This survey was published by the Eugenics Society in 1946. One conclusion goes:

“It seems almost certain that there is in this country a negative correlation between innate intelligence and size of family, and that the size of the correlation is large enough to demand urgent practical attention. ”

Professor G. Thomson, at a meeting to discuss the survey, stated that any decline in intelligence of large families might be due not to inherited characteristics, but to relative lack of cultural opportunity. Another reassuring point was that although at least 50 per cent of the variants found in intelligence tests might be due to inheritance, it was still possible that the remaining 30 to 40 per cent due to educational environment or nutritional factors might have a decisive influence.

Many infant lives are still lost which might be saved. My investigations show an increase in the size of the families, and although there is some increase in income, their standard of living is low. The apparent decline in intelligence of large families may be due to this. Clearly the bad living conditions of large families is a pressing national problem.

CHAPTER XI

INCOME

“Poverty impairs health and limits general knowledge. Low physical vitality diminishes capacity to learn. By restricting the mental horizon the children are deprived of a background of worldly lore and culture that most schools take for granted. Efficiency of the mind varies with the state of the body. Full working order cannot be maintained if deprived of proper food, proper clothing, proper housing and sleep. Poverty leads to a perpetual state of ill-health. Little money coming into the home means poor food, too little living space, poor furnishings and table equipment, lack of books and newspapers, and little travel. There is no stimulus for progression to a higher level. This further results in low economic status. There is thus a vicious circle which needs to be broken.” (Sir Cyril Burt.)

BURT has shown that the closest possible relationship exists between poverty and backwardness. His estimate for the country as a whole before the war was 10 per cent of backwardness. But whereas only 1 per cent of the child population in wealthy residential areas like Hampstead and Wandsworth and towns like Cheltenham were backward, in poverty-stricken areas like Shoreditch, Bethnal Green and industrial areas there were nearer 20 per cent of backward children. In a table prepared by him showing the distribution of backward children compared with social characteristics of the boroughs of London, he demonstrated that the boroughs having the greatest incidence of backwardness among school children, viz.: Shoreditch, Bethnal Green, Southwark, Finsbury, Bermondsey, Stepney and Poplar, also had the

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highest percentage of population below the poverty line. In the same table, we see that the boroughs of Hackney, Stoke Newington, Hampstead, Wandsworth and Lewisham, having the lowest numbers of backward children, have also fewest people below the poverty line.

The income of a family is, therefore, all-important in discussing backwardness among school children.

I have ascertained the incomes of the families of my boys by asking parents what money came in from their own earnings, from among children at work and from other adults living with the family as members of the family. To this I added children's allowances and then divided the total income by the number of individuals living as a family group. I checked these figures where possible with those given in *Time Rates of Wages and Hours of Labour*, September 1st, 1947, of the Ministry of Labour and National Service (His Majesty's Stationery Office).

Incomes per head per week of my 31 families were:

| <i>Incomes</i> | <i>No. of Families</i> |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Up to £1 | 3 |
| £1 to £1 10s. | 12 |
| £1 10s. to £2 | 8 |
| £2 to £2 10s. | 6 |
| £2 10s. to £3 | 1 |
| £3 | 1 |

The rents of the families range from round 13s. od. to £1 2s. 6d. per week. One family is purchasing the house and shop they occupy. Rent is an important item of expenditure in a working-class home. It is of more significance these days when the tendency is for earnings to drop and rents and rates to increase. Rents of accommodation owned by the Kensington Borough

Council have increased by as much as 30 per cent. Landlords of non-council property are also seeking powers to increase the rent of their houses. Thus general hardship will be thrown upon the people least able to bear extra burdens. An additional charge on the income of these people is the repair and decoration of dilapidated homes. Such repairs are the responsibility of the landlord, but the tenants, finding that the landlord fails to do necessary repairs, does the work himself and in some cases is reimbursed by the landlord for the cost of material.

Sir John Boyd Orr in 1935 found that spending less than 9s. per head per week on food meant being deprived of essential vitamins and minerals necessary for health. More than one-third of the country's population came within this category. *The London and Cambridge Economic Survey* (May 12th, 1947) estimated that the cost of goods for personal consumption had gone up from 1935 to mid-1947 by 64 per cent. On this basis the 9s. of 1935 would be equivalent to 14s. 9d. In these classes, the average amount spent on food can be taken as 40 per cent of income, so the weekly income per head to ensure a satisfactory diet is £1 17s. 0d.

I estimate that 20 out of my 31 children are in families getting below this level of income, while, in 1937, 22 out of my class of 26 were in families not earning enough to provide a wholesome diet.

This improvement in income is reflected in the general physical development, the food and clothing of the children. The period under investigation was probably the best economically, as far as workers were concerned, for many years. From 1939 there had been regularity of employment, either in the Forces or in industry. But, as the year 1947 approached its end, there were signs of deterioration in the children resulting from reduced employment of their guardians. If wages are to be pegged

and prices continue to rise, what will happen to the improved position of the people over pre-war days? It is true that Sir Stafford Cripps urges lowering prices, but there is agreement that prices nevertheless have risen. The people want improved amenities for themselves and their families. They want not only homes, but also bathrooms. They want not only bread and margarine and tea, but also real butter and jam on their bread.

Before the war there were in being two organisations—the Committee against Malnutrition and the Children's Minimum Council. Their names implied their aims. Their merging into a new body styled the Children's Nutrition Council showed a changed outlook. No longer was the struggle one to keep body and soul together and be satisfied with an income around the poverty line, but a struggle for getting the best available, the best that the country's factories and farms could produce, to give our children a fuller and higher standard of life.

CASE FOR INCREASED FAMILY ALLOWANCES

Men and women, whether in manual or professional employment, are not paid according to family responsibilities. A man without dependents earning £5 per week comes within Sir John Orr's category of income for ability to partake of a satisfactory diet. When the man gets married his income remains the same but he now has to find and furnish a home. This takes a big proportion of his pay and any savings he may have had. When children come along, he steadily goes below the income per head which ensures good nutrition.

Parliament recognised this first of all by income tax allowances. The Government now allows 5s. per child after the first one. Parents are universally agreed that far more is spent in preparing for and rearing the first child than subsequent children. This is only one defect in the

scheme. The second major defect is the amount. Sir William Beveridge had suggested 8s. per week, but Sir John Anderson, representing the Coalition Government that passed the Bill, insisted on the sum of 5s., with the promise that at some future time the allowance would be given in respect of the first child and that certain non-monetary benefits would be extended to all children, namely, free school meals. Although the Act came into force in August, 1946, we do not seem to be getting nearer either of these benefits.

It should be remembered that average *real* wages have dropped since then as prices have gone up and are still rising. All the more need, therefore, to increase the allowances.

Mrs. Eva Hubback in *The Population of Britain* (Penguin Books Ltd.) advocates that:

“Both financial assistance and the social services for mothers and children should be considerably increased and should supplement one another, so that, taken together, they would provide for the essential subsistence needs of children.

“The present scheme of family allowances should be amended so that the amount should be raised to an average allowance of 10s.”

If the nation wants its children to grow up into healthy beings, it must accept its responsibility to the children in a generous and not in a niggardly fashion.

We find that as a result of the war and general full employment after the war, the parents of North Kensington are better off financially than they were before the war. As shown, this has resulted in a better standard of nutrition and clothing—two sides of life over which the people had some say in spending their money. Subsidies and governmental control helped to keep prices of

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essential foods within the limit of the incomes of the people.

Because of the close relationship between poverty and the educational level of the child, it is necessary for all concerned with the physical and mental welfare of children to do what they can to ensure an adequate income per head of the family.

CHAPTER XII

HOME CONDITIONS

“On the present data, we are entitled to conclude that progressive improvement in home conditions may be expected to react favourably not only on the health, but also on the intelligence of school children. Another argument is thus provided for further efforts to ameliorate the home conditions of the children who attend elementary schools.” (Dr. L. Isserliss, *Medical Research Council Report* 74.)

IT is a truism that teachers and others interested in children, particularly those children below par physically and mentally, should know about their home conditions. A school child spends approximately seven-eighths of his life out of school and only one-eighth in school. We have already seen that family income is the greatest factor in determining the kind of home and the kind of life a child leads. The accommodation determines whether the amount of space per person is effective for good health; whether there is enough room for beds to give each child adequate rest at night; what play space he has; whether he gets in the way of the adults and is pushed out in the street when he ought to be indoors; whether the rooms are damp or insanitary; whether there is a garden or open spaces for play. Defects in any of these conditions will lead to bad physical health, resulting in inefficient working of his mind.

The principal condition that determines comfort is the degree of crowding or overcrowding in the home. The Housing Act of 1936 laid down guiding principles to determine the minimum standard of accommodation.

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This standard aimed at securing proper sex segregation and put restrictions on the number of persons who may occupy a dwelling-house. The two requirements are distinct from each other and both must be met. A "dwelling-house" means "any premises used as a separate dwelling by members of the working classes, or of a type suitable for such use."

I append an explanation of these requirements:

1. A dwelling-house is deemed to be overcrowded if the accommodation is such that any two persons, being ten years old or more, of opposite sexes and not being persons living together as husband and wife, are obliged to sleep in the same room.
2. The maximum number of persons, irrespective of sex, who may be permitted to sleep in a dwelling-house at one time is fixed in relation to the number and sizes of the rooms in the house. The maximum permitted number is ascertained by reference to the two following tables, and is the number obtained by the application of Table I and Table II, whichever is the less:

TABLE I

| <i>No. of Rooms</i> | <i>Permitted No. of Persons</i> |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | 2 |
| 2 | 3 |
| 3 | 5 |
| 4 | 7½ |
| 5 | 10 |

and two persons extra for each additional room.

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TABLE II

| <i>Size of Rooms</i> | <i>Permitted No. of Persons</i> |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Under 50 square feet | Nil |
| 50 or more, but less than 70 | $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| 70 or more, but less than 90 | 1 |
| 90 or more, but less than 100 | $1\frac{1}{2}$ |
| 110 or more | 2 |

A child under one year of age is not counted and a child between the ages of one and ten years counts as half a person.

Only rooms normally used in the locality for sleeping or living purposes are counted as rooms. No room under 50 square feet is counted.

Rooms occupied by a sub-tenant must be regarded as a separate dwelling-house.

In assessing the size of rooms, the floor area is measured from the level of the floor, and includes bay window extensions and space taken up by cupboards and projecting chimney-breasts. Where, however, the height of the ceiling above the floor does not exceed five feet, then the floor area below that part of the ceiling is disregarded.

In order to secure the effectiveness of these requirements, certain duties are laid upon the landlord and the tenant, but owing to the prevailing shortage of houses it is difficult to enforce these regulations. However, every rent book or similar document must contain a summary of the Act relating to overcrowding, including a statement of the permitted number of persons allowed.

To ascertain the conditions of the home life of my school children, I visited their homes in 1937 and 1947.

In 1937 I found little evidence of overcrowding. The area round Barlby Road School had been scheduled by

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the Kensington Borough Council as an "Improvement Area". New blocks of flats were erected in the vicinity, unfit basement dwellings were cleared, and the overcrowded and basement dwellers were transferred to these new, modern flats. At that time, I suggested that it would have been better to declare the district a "Slum Clearance Area", and to pull the lot down and build new flats. This was not done. But what the people themselves did not do, the war has done for them. Much of the property round my pre-war school was so badly bombed that large areas have been cleared for rehousing purposes.

In 1947, the families of the boys in my class were housed as follows:

One had rooms over a shop, owned by the father. He sold second-hand clothes and surplus war goods.

Two families had a house each.

Fourteen households were in self-contained flats in modern blocks.

Fourteen families lived in tenements. These are houses shared by tenants and sub-tenants, with little or no adaptation for the comfort of the separate homes.

Generally, the rooms were in a bad state of repair and decoration. In several cases the tenants were doing what they could to brighten their surroundings. The amenities of the flats were superior to those of the tenements.

The following table shows the number of persons per room for the families studied. In reaching these figures,

| <i>Persons per room</i> | <i>No. of households</i> |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1.0-1.5 | 4 |
| 1.6-2.0 | 9 |
| 2.1-2.5 | 10 |
| 2.6-3.0 | 8 |
| Total .. | 31 |

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children under one year of age were not included, and children between one year and ten years counted as half a person.

According to Tables I and II governing overcrowding, 24 families were living in overcrowded conditions. There were nine homes overcrowded by a half to one person; ten homes by $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 persons; three homes by $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 persons; and one home by 4 persons.

Compared with 1937 the housing condition of the children in North Kensington shows serious deterioration.

Here are a few close-ups of some of the particular homes.

Stan's father is a welder in a factory making metal drums. The mother does not go to work. One girl is married, and there are nine children left at home—a girl of 18, a hairdresser; a boy of 17, an engineer; a boy of 15 who breaks up guns; four children of school age; and two under five. They occupy a flat in a modern block. There is a living room, a kitchen-scully, three bedrooms, a bathroom with gas geyser. In the first bedroom there is one bed for mother, dad and baby. In the second, there is one bed for three boys aged 17, 15 and 11. In the third bedroom, there is one bed shared by a girl of 18, a girl of 9, and a boy of 7, and a second bed for a girl of 14 and a boy of 4. They sleep "top and bottom" or "head to feet". Stan, aged 11, sleeps between the two older boys. His mother commented, "I don't know how he sleeps at all." Here, the overcrowding is extreme. The flat was kept clean. Evidently this is a musical family, as there is a piano, wireless set and a piano accordion. Application was made to the Kensington Borough Council for a larger place. The Council offered alternative accommodation, but because there was no bathroom it was refused.

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I arrived at Dick's flat as the family were coming home from work. I was offered tea. Dick's father has deserted the home. This is a fine family. Three sons have served in the Forces; another boy works in a laundry; two girls are bank clerks; one girl is a cashier; another girl is taking School Leaving Certificate; and three boys are still at school. The family at home numbered nine.

The sleeping arrangements were as follows:

A camp bed was put up at night for one boy in the living room. In the first bedroom, in one bed, were mother and Dick, aged nine. Mother said, "I keep right away from him." In another bed in the same room were two girls of 21 and 18.

In the second bedroom, in one bed was a boy of 18 and in another bed was a boy of 13. In the third bedroom were two single beds for two girls, 24 and 16.

The rooms are small. Here there is definite overcrowding. Application has been made to the Kensington Borough Council for alternative extra accommodation, but the reply was that there are in the Borough many families of this size who have been on the list much longer and have not yet had a chance of better accommodation.

The scullery has cooker, sink, bath and boiler. The bath in the scullery is evidence of bad planning. The mother complained how hopeless her task was. She could not use sink or cooker when the bath was in use. As there were nine in the family, there was always a muddle. If the Council cannot do anything for this family, then housing in Kensington has reached a very low level. The table was very nicely laid for tea with a clean, white cloth. The eldest daughter was distempering the ceiling and walls of one of the rooms.

* * *

Derek lives in a top flat of a building erected in 1884. The place is called Handover Dwellings—a Dickensian

name with a Dickensian significance. It does not conform to modern requirements. Father has left the family. The impression given is of extreme poverty. There is no wireless. They want to move. Mother said to me, "This place is unlucky—the people are all dying." The whole place is dilapidated and walls and ceilings are in a very poor state. Paper is coming away from the walls. The broken wall of the fireplace is covered with brown paper. The lino is badly worn and the kitchen table was uncovered. Derek's bed has broken springs, no pillow-slips or sheets. The pillow is soiled by hair grease. There is a communal wash-house for four flats. The sink only is used. In the wash-house there is a coffin-like box containing old, rotting bedding. There are two W.C.s, but only one is serviceable, the cistern of the other being in pieces. There are three rooms, one used as living-room and kitchen combined, a bedroom for mother and sister, and a bedroom for two boys. There are no bathing facilities; they use a bowl. This is a case for the sanitary inspector. The Council has the power to do repairs and renovations, and such power should be exercised.

The state of Derek's bed brought home to me the significance of an incident which happened in Taunton the day after evacuation in 1939. I was visiting the children billeted in outlying houses and farms. As I approached one farm I jumped off my cycle and six-year-old Betty came tumbling towards me. Her face was full of joy and her eyes sparkled as she called out: "Oh, sir, I slept in a real bed."

* * *

Colin lived on the ground floor of a former public house. The father was a cook in a circus. The mother was pregnant. Besides the parents, there were six children at home. Two others were living and working away from home; one of these, a boy of 17, remained at Maidenhead

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where he was evacuated. The rooms were in a bad state of decoration and generally bare of furniture. The "parlour" was damp: liquid from the lavatory above percolated through the ceiling and walls and the room was not fit for use. The living-room, which also served as kitchen and bedroom, is L-shaped, with a window at the end of one limb of the L, leaving the other limb dark. In this room there was a bed for mother, father and a boy of one year old. In one bedroom there was a bed for two girls, aged 16 and 13, and a boy of two. In the other room stood a bed for two boys, 10 and five years. Mother remarked, "I have tried my utmost to get another place." The occupants of these rooms should be rehoused.

* * *

Peter's home is a tenement over a shop used as a workshop. Peter's mother was a chronic invalid. She had a stroke in 1946, when the last baby was born, and had been unable to do any domestic work since. The occupant of the rooms on the floor below helped now and then, but had her own baby of four months. Peter was frequently kept at home to do the house work. He makes cakes and can cook a dinner. Without any prompting, he brought in two cups of tea. He handed one to his mother and one to me. These rooms needed repair and decoration. Rain came through the roof; the paper was peeling off the ceiling. On the landing there was a gas cooker and the water tap. There was a living-room with a bare table, and the lino on the floor was patched and worn.

In one bedroom there was one bed for mother and father, a girl of five and baby one year old.

In the second bedroom there were two beds; one was for two boys, eight and 14 years; and the other was for Peter. There were no pillow-slips or sheets on these beds.

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Peter's bed covering was one blanket and some old overcoats.

The mother has since died. Some official investigations on the conditions in this house seem to be necessary.

* * *

Malcolm's flat is overcrowded by $3\frac{1}{2}$ persons. There is no space in the living-room for the nine persons in the family, so the young ones feed in the scullery. They have been on the L.C.C. list for new premises since 1945. The sexes are mixed for sleeping. These are the sleeping arrangements: first bedroom—mother and father in one bed, a boy of three years in another; second bedroom—two girls of 15 and 16 years of age in one bed, and two boys aged 11 and 13 years in a second bed; third bedroom—one bed for two boys, ages 21 and 11 years. The father was wounded six times in World War I; he escaped from Dunkirk in World War II, and inhaled poisonous fumes when filling a bomb crater in Hyde Park. Since then he suffers from stomach trouble.

* * *

Martin lives in a house. There are eight in the family. The father would like to move to the country. He keeps rabbits and a duck, and grows flowers in boxes.

* * *

Sidney's living-room is behind a shop used for storing bottles of disinfectant from a neighbouring factory. The room was generally in a dirty state, the floor-boards having no covering. Between the shop and the living-room there was a narrow portion partitioned off. No direct daylight reached this part, where there is a cooker. The top floor is unoccupied and is structurally dangerous.

* * *

Maurice inhabits a basement in an old block of flats.

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The tenants do not remember when the walls and wood-work were last cleaned or decorated. In the living-room sleep Maurice and his brother of four. In a second room, in one bed, sleep three girls aged 17, 14 and 12 years. In the third room there is a bed for mum and dad. The rooms and stairways are in a bad state of repair. Application has been made for other premises. These have been promised, when rent arrears have been paid.

* * *

Tony lives in a tenement of three rooms. There are seven in the family. In one bedroom there are two beds, one for three girls aged 14, 13 and nine, and one for two boys of 11 and five. This is an example of mixed sexes sharing a room and is against the law. The living-room is also used as a kitchen. The lavatory is shared with another tenant. The furnishing was poor but the rooms were clean and the floors lino-covered. The decorations were bad, but the family were themselves redecorating the rooms.

* * *

Harry lives in a modern flat. In one bedroom sleep the mother, a girl of 12 and a boy of five in one bed, and in the same room is a double-tier bed for two girls. Mother was painting the walls during my visit.

* * *

Simon's flat was being painted by his father, who had been allowed £3 for the purchase of material. He complained that the gas lighting blackened the ceilings.

* * *

The same complaint regarding dirty ceilings due to gas lighting was made by Henry's father in another block of flats. Here they were supplied with hot water throughout the week, and mother said what a boon it was. The beds

and bedding were good and covered with attractive bedspreads.

* * *

Charlie's father commented that children in flats were pinned down; they needed grounds and fields. At the back the trees, which needed lopping, darkened the rooms, while the balconies obscured the light from the front of the flats. Particularly dark, in this block of flats, were those which had in front of them the external stairway and dust-chute.

* * *

Bill lives outside the Kensal New Town area in a tenement on the ground floor. Husband and wife sleep in one room and two boys and a girl in another. Another baby was expected. Rain pours through the roof, top floor (unoccupied) and first floor into the children's bedroom. When it rains their beds are shifted to the kitchen, and back again when it is dry. The floors are shaky and there is no banister-rail in the passage by the stairs leading to the basement. Father has tried to redecorate, but the walls are so bad he has given up the task. The plaster is off the ceiling in the top rooms, the basement walls are rotting through the damp. The floor-boards in the basement have been taken up to shutter the front basement windows. The house agent and Borough Council have been informed.

* * *

Michael's father is blind. They live in a ground floor tenement. In the living-room was a folding bed for dad. In the bedroom there was one bed for mum and a girl of four years, and a cot for a baby of three weeks. On a settee slept a girl of 13. There was another bed for Michael—nine years—and a boy of seven years. Up till the time the baby was born Michael had been sleeping in the cot. Outside this room was a shed used as a scullery. This

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kept out light and air from the adjoining room. Both the London County Council and the Kensington Borough Council were trying to find a house for the family.

* * *

Sam's home is marred by a quarrel between mother and father. Although living in the same house, they are estranged. The rooms are spacious, well-furnished and clean. Mother is a housekeeper-cook for a well-to-do family. There is a living room containing the cooker and electric geyser. The "front room" or "parlour" has a sideboard, three-piece suite, piano and highly polished lino and rugs. The bathroom has a gas geyser. The rooms were in a good state of repair, the family doing their own decorations. I was handed tea and home-made cakes.

* * *

Steven's home is exemplary. There is a kitchen-living room; a parlour well furnished; a bedroom for mum and dad; and a separate room for the only child—Steven. Mother decorates the rooms herself every year.

* * *

Pat also has a good home. There was a piano, good toys and a good collection of children's books. House repairs and renovating were done by the family.

* * *

A general summary of my findings on the home conditions follows:

Of the 31 families, there were 24 living in some degree of overcrowding, ranging from $\frac{1}{2}$ person (a child under 10) to four persons. This proportion seems very high. It was reported that out of a waiting list of 4,500 applicants for houses the Kensington Borough Council deem 454 of their homes to be overcrowded. That is about 10 per cent of the cases on the waiting list.

A total of 14 families had a living-room with a separate kitchen which was not used as a bedroom. Nine had a living-room combined with kitchen. One had a living-room used as kitchen and bedroom. Seven had a living-room used also as a bedroom. Four had separate drawing-rooms, equivalent to the Victorian parlour and reserved for special occasions and particular visitors. For water supply there were three cases where the tap and sink were on the landing. One family had a gas cooker on the landing.

As for W.C.s, 23 families had their own private toilet, 17 being indoors, and six in the backyard. In three cases the lavatory was shared with one other family, in two cases with two other families, and in one case with three other families. Outdoor lavatories should be abolished, and extra provision made ensuring one lavatory per family.

For bathing, 16 families had a properly fitted bath, two used the public baths, 12 had "tin baths", water being heated on the gas, and one used a bowl. Of the 16 fitted baths, one was in the kitchen-scuttery, two were in the wash-house—water being obtained from the copper, one was in the basement. Five obtained water from a central boiler in the blocks of flats, four had gas geysers, two had coppers, and one had a boiler at the back of the fire in the living-room.

One of the surprising factors observed was the form of lighting. 27 dwellings had gas lighting, while only four had electric lighting. If the labour and material were available, I would suggest the conversion to electric lighting. Any new flats erected in the district should be electrically lighted and electric points provided for domestic use.

Coal or coke in open fires was used by 26 families; two used oil-stoves, and three gas-fires. One boy said, "We

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wrap blankets round us to keep us warm." Central heating would be a boon to these families, reducing household drudgery.

What experimental and research work has been done in the past, relating home conditions to child development, shows a direct relationship between home conditions and physical and mental development.

Sir John Boyd Orr states: "In considering the different types of ill-health, it has been difficult to assess the relative importance of diet and other factors. As income level falls, housing and other environmental conditions change. Even apart from the known deleterious effect on health, the social evil of slums is so great that any suggestion that housing is of less importance than other social reforms is to be deprecated."¹

It is also well worth noting the findings of the Glasgow Medical Officer for Health. He records figures for boys and girls, showing their average heights and weights, and the conclusion he reaches is that the larger the number of rooms occupied by a family of a given size, the heavier and the taller are the children. Dr. McGonigle of Stockton-on-Tees, and Dr. Cole of Beckenham, show that this conclusion does not hold good when rent is disproportionately high.

The importance of abolishing slums so as to combat deafness is stressed by the Board of Education in *Administrative Memorandum No. 182* (H.M. Stationery Office). The decline in the volume of deafness is due to two causes—prevention and improved methods of treatment. Since "running ears" are often the aftermath of the common infectious diseases such as measles, scarlet fever, influenza, and the common cold, measures taken to prevent these or to minimise the secondary infections which

¹ Sir John Boyd Orr, *Food, Health and Income*. (Macmillan & Co. Ltd.)

complicate them are suggested. When resistance to disease is lowered by poor feeding or bad environment, then otitis, like all other complications of these diseases, occurs more often and is more difficult to cure. The memorandum continues:

“Every improvement in hygienic conditions, in ventilation, in eliminating overcrowded, poor and damp housing, will diminish the incidence of otitis media. Every slum and overcrowded tenement abolished, every unhygienic school rebuilt on open-air lines, is a step towards this end.”

The efficient working of the brain is also closely related to adequate bodily relaxation obtained through sleep. No reliable information was obtained in this inquiry as to the time at which the children went to bed, but a walk round the district, particularly in summer, showed that they go to bed at a very late hour. Late bed-going is due to factors such as verminous beds, older relations sharing the bed or bedroom, excessive heat indoors, noises of the adults and wireless and the distraction of the street social life. This means sleepiness while in school, inattention to lessons and lack of progress.

The Chief Sanitary Inspector for Smethwick, Mr. J. H. Wright, made a notable contribution on the need for homes at the annual conference of the Sanitary Inspectors' Association in May 1947. He stated that the evils of overcrowding were squalor, ill-health, unhappiness, delayed marriages and discord in shared houses. If local authorities would make effective use of their powers of requisitioning, nearly a quarter of a million working-class families could be housed with four rooms apiece. He estimated that 3,000,000 families were so overcrowded as to make normal comfort out of the question. The standard used for assessing overcrowding made no provision for the isolation and nursing of a sick member of the

family or for the need to put up a friend or a relative for a night or week-end. Mr. Wright concluded his address with a building programme for the country.

Undercrowding is a further aspect of the housing problem of this country. Before the war, in preparation for evacuation, a housing survey on a national scale was made in the "safe" areas. Details were obtained as to number of rooms and number of occupants in a dwelling, and number of evacuees that might be placed. A similar census was made in London towards the end of the war with a view to rehousing the bombed-out in other parts of London. Such a survey would be useful now, and arrangements made for a more equitable distribution of housing. People should be encouraged to suit their homes to the number comprising the family. By so doing, they will not only relieve the serious overcrowding, but give young people a chance to get married and rear families.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CHILDREN'S FOOD

"The standard of nutrition that should be adopted is one that will enable people to attain their maximum inherited capacity for health and physical fitness. In animal husbandry an optimum diet, far from being utopian, is regarded as good practice. If children were reared for profit like young farm stock, then giving them a diet below the requirements for health would be financially unsound. Unfortunately, the health and physical fitness of the rising generation are not marketable commodities which can be assessed in terms of money." (Sir John Boyd Orr, *Food, Health and Income*. Macmillan & Co. Ltd.)

OF the two most important primary necessities of life—food and shelter—food must come first. Good feeding is essential to keep children free from illness and for the attainment of good health. The proper functioning of the brain depends on the material conditions of the brain. So that the process of thinking, which is part of the activity of the brain, depends on good health, which in turn is dependent upon adequate nutrition.

How does the food my present children have compare with that of 1937?

My book, *Penn'orth of Chips* (Gollancz), based on the 1937 investigation, was so called because the title was the epitome of the bad conditions of the children of North Kensington at that time. The phrase was derived from a conversation with a boy in the class. I had read of an experiment by the National Institute of Industrial Psy-

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chology with some Barking school children. This showed that the weight, the hand temperature, resistance to fatigue and achievement in school subjects of an experimental group of children receiving a dietetically balanced breakfast were more satisfactory than those of an otherwise similar control group being fed at home. After reading this, I touched or shook the hands of the boys and kept those whose hands were cold in front of the class.

The children were asked what breakfast they had and one conversation went as follows:

"What did you have for breakfast, John?"

"Half a cup of tea and half a slice of bread and butter."

"Real butter?"

"Oh no! Margarine."

"Well, John. What did you have for dinner yesterday?"

"Bread and butter and tea."

"What did you have for tea, then?"

"Half a slice of bread and half a cup of tea."

"And what about supper?"

"Oh, we never have any supper except of a Saturday night, when we get a penn'orth of chips."

In comparing the diets of the two periods, it should be remembered that while there was extensive unemployment in 1937, the beginning of 1947 was a time of full employment following a war period when there was work for all. Food rationing was in full swing, and essential foodstuffs were subsidised, keeping prices within purchasable power of the people.

Overleaf are the 1937 diets of three boys whose fathers were unemployed:

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| <i>Case</i> | <i>Breakfast</i> | <i>Dinner</i> | <i>Tea</i> | <i>Supper</i> | <i>Extras</i> |
|-------------|---------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| A | Oats | Potatoes, corned beef | Bones, potatoes, greens | Bacon-bone soup | — |
| I | Toast, tea | School dinner | Cakes, bread, butter, tea | — | Free milk |
| M | Biscuits, coffee | Steak, potatoes | Cakes, coffee | — | Does not like tea |

Their diets can be compared with those of three boys of the 1947 group, whose family incomes are among the lowest in the class:

Colin—Father is a cook at a circus; mother is at home; one girl of 14 is at work, three children are at school, two are under school age.

Michael—Father is blind and unemployed, mother is at home; three children are at school, two under school age.

William—Father is dead; mother is a paper-bag maker; one boy of 15 is at work, three children are at school.

| <i>Name</i> | <i>Breakfast</i> | <i>Dinner</i> | <i>Tea</i> | <i>Supper</i> | <i>Extras</i> |
|-------------|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Colin | Bread, butter, tea | Bread, butter, tea | Half pie, potatoes, tea | Bread, butter, tea | School milk |
| Michael | Bread, butter, tea | **Soup, steamed roll | Bread, margarine, jam, tea | Bread, margarine, jam, tea | School milk |
| William | Bread, butter, jam, cake, tea | Potatoes, greens, sausages | Bread, butter, paste, tea | — | School milk, cod liver oil, apple |

** At Feathers' Club.

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Comparison shows that there is little if any improvement in the lowest income groups in the ten years.

Here are the diets of children in 1937, whose fathers were in permanent employment.

First are given fathers' employment and number of children:

F. Father was a baker, four children were under 14 years.

G. Father was a railway fireman, a boy was at school, and there was a baby.

X. Father was a railway engine driver, one boy was at school.

Z. Father was a dustman, one boy was at school.

| <i>Case</i> | <i>Breakfast</i> | <i>Dinner</i> | <i>Tea</i> | <i>Supper</i> | <i>Extras</i> |
|-------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| F. | Bread, butter, tea | Potatoes, meat, greens | Bread, butter, tea | Cornflakes | "Don't like cold milk" |
| G. | Bread, butter, tea | Sausages, potatoes, greens | Toast, tea | — | "Can't afford milk" |
| X. | Bread, butter, jam, tea | Rabbit, potatoes | Egg, bacon | Tea | Table well laid |
| Z. | Bread, butter, tea | Two "Oxo's", bread | Bread, butter, tea | Broth | Milk |

These meals should be compared with those of some of my better-off 1947 boys.

Bob—Father is a shopkeeper, one brother has own shop, another brother is a clerk, three children are at school.

Montagu—Father does removals with pony and cart, mother is a clerk, three children are at school.

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Mervyn—Father is a stoker at gas works, mother does domestic work, two girls are at work, one boy is at school.

Sam—Father tars roads, mother is a cook, two children are at work, one boy is at school.

| <i>Name</i> | <i>Breakfast</i> | <i>Dinner</i> | <i>Tea</i> | <i>Supper</i> | <i>Extras</i> |
|-------------|--------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Bob .. | Bread, butter, jam, tea | Cold meat rolls, tea | Fish and chips, bread, butter, tea | — | School milk, chestnuts |
| Montagu | Bread, butter, egg, bacon, tea | School dinner | Blanc-mange, custard, bread | Flakes, tea | School milk, orange |
| Mervyn .. | Porridge, tea | Meat, potatoes, greens, jam tart, custard | Fish, bread, butter, tea | Porridge | School milk, chestnuts |
| Sam .. | None—headache | Meat, potatoes, greens, pudding, custard, cheese | Sausages, potatoes, greens, tea | Bread, butter, tea | School milk |

The food of these 1947 boys shows improvement over that of the 1937 classes, where the parents were in regular employment.

Six of the 1947 boys were having school dinners at the beginning of the year, but only two had school dinners in 1937.

In 1947, seven boys mentioned having an egg for a meal, four had fish and chips bought at a shop, one had fish prepared at home, one had a salad for tea, two had cheese.

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Parents might have made more use of fish at meals. This is a valuable protein food and would have improved the children's diet. That cheese should only be mentioned twice calls for comment. It may be that cheese was eaten on other days than the day of the enquiry, or possibly the ration was used to supplement the food of those members of the family who went to work.

An analysis of the jam or treacle eaten showed 22 references among the 120 meals described. This seems to be fewer than one would expect.

Concerning fruit and salads, four mentioned fruit as part of a meal, and one had a salad tea. Twenty boys stated they had some fruit apart from meals. Usually this was bought out of their pocket money, which in other days would have been spent on sweets.

Henry remarked that Nellie was the only one to have fruit in his family, as she was ill.

An overall comparison of the diets in the years 1937 and 1947 shows that while starchy foods predominated in 1937, there was a greater variety in 1947, and a better supply of protein and vitamin foods.

The diet of the poorest boys in the class is as deficient as that of the 1937 children of unemployed families. The food of the more fortunate boys at the beginning of 1947 shows improvement over the meals of 1937 of the children whose fathers were in so-called permanent employment. Towards the end of 1947, when some parents were out of work, the food position deteriorated. Simon stated he had carrot soup for dinner—his father was selling logs and was trying to get a job for Christmas.

Elsewhere it was demonstrated that the weekly income per head needed in mid-1947 to cover overhead expenses and to ensure a satisfactory diet was £1 17s. At that time, 20 out of my 31 children were in families getting below this income level, as compared with 1937, when

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22 out of my then class of 26 boys were in families not earning enough to enjoy a wholesome diet.

In 1937 it was told how food was destroyed and fish thrown back into the sea because the dealers could not make enough profit, while children were short of nourishment. The story can be repeated for 1947. During August, owing to high prices demanded, cucumbers found no buyers in Covent Garden, while apples were fed to the pigs. In February, in America, potatoes were used as a fertiliser. On June 2nd, fish was dumped in the sea in many ports round the British Isles.

To avoid such destruction and to raise the physical level of our children, the Ministry of Food should plan for increased food production and food imports and should itself organise distribution at the lowest prices.

CHAPTER XIV

SCHOOL FEEDING

“It is beyond doubt that in present circumstances the schools must assume a part in the life of the community not formerly required of them. For example, if minimum standards of nutrition are to be set up, they must be established on a material scale. School feeding is therefore an accepted policy, and free meals constitute a part of the family allowances under the scheme for Social Security. Experience has demonstrated how children benefit from this policy, and the physical benefit is by no means all: the meals have also an educational value in the school. A child can learn in this way, as he never can in the best of homes, how to behave in public as a member of a social community; and this is a valuable part of his education.” (*School and Home*, H.M. Stationary Office.)

THE story of school-feeding goes back to the Boer War, when the war authorities were alarmed at the poor physique of volunteers and the high percentage of rejections on medical grounds. Rowntree conducted an inquiry in 1900 in the City of York, and an Inter-departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration reported in 1904. Both these investigations found that many children received insufficient quantities of food and that a condition of semi-starvation was common. It was recognised that, as a consequence of lack of food, a condition of mind and body was produced which made educational progress highly improbable. The Education (Provision of School Meals) Act, 1905, was passed to remedy this state of affairs.

The Education Act, 1944, imposes upon the local education authorities the duty of providing milk, meals

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and other refreshment to children in attendance at schools maintained by them. This Act differs from the previous Act in that school feeding is made obligatory on the local education authority with the intention that meals should be free and supplementary to the family allowance. This allowance was fixed at the low figure of 5s. per child after the first in a family because it was the intention of Parliament that free school meals should come into force at the same time as the allowance. (*M. of E. Circular No. 34, March 27th, 1945.*)

Here are specimen daily figures relating to school feeding:

PRE-WAR

Class at Barlby Road School, W.10: two dinners out of 25 on roll—8 per cent.

In London as a whole: about 10,000 dinners, being 2.5 per cent of the school attendance.

For the country: about 3.5 per cent received school meals.

POST-WAR

At the beginning of 1947 the children of Middle Row met at Barlby Road School for dinners. The maximum number allowed to the junior department was 49 dinners out of the school roll of 246. My class had six taking these meals out of a roll of 31. In December, 1947, when our children had meals in their own building, the number out of a school roll of 238 who could have dinners was limited to 90. The meals, already cooked, were brought from a central kitchen.

During 1948 building operations were in progress in the school on the construction of kitchens. These kitchens should be ready late in 1949 and a larger number of children accommodated.

Fifteen children of my class had school dinners—roll 33, attendance 26—in December, 1947. Actually, in

that December, 90 children were having dinners out of 208 present, being approximately 44 per cent of those present. This was the maximum allowed, as the Feeding Centre had not the equipment to allow for more meals to be allotted to the school. None of these were free. But at the end of 1948 nine children out of a roll of 235 were having free dinners.

For London, as a whole, figures quoted in October, 1947 were 50.26 per cent of attendance, representing the serving of 158,939 dinners on a typical day, of which 13,181 were free, a percentage of 8.3 of school dinners served. On a day in June, 1948, 50.9 per cent of London children had school dinners.

For the country, in June, 1947, it was stated that 2,320,000 had dinners out of a school population of 4,780,000 attending grant-aided primary and secondary schools—a percentage of 48.5.

While the school is just below the proportion of children having dinners in London and the country, the numbers relating to free dinners show a serious discrepancy. Not a single child in the school during December, 1947 was receiving a free school dinner, and this in a school situated in one of the poorest parts of London. One parent remarked to me that he would not apply for free school meals for his children when he was out of work, as this was charity.

Kensal New Town, the district in which the school is situated, is possibly on the lowest economic rung of London's income ladder. The incomes of the families would certainly come within the range of the 15 per cent mentioned in *Circular No. 34*, (Min. of Educ.) A broad inquiry would show that if the spirit of the Act were put into practice, most Middle Row children would receive free school dinners. There seems to be a serious lack of appreciation of the school-feeding scheme, not only

among parents, but also among those who administer the scheme.

Circular No. 34, to which reference has been made above, states:

“In a number of areas the proportion of free meals is so much lower than the general average (15 per cent at public elementary schools) as to suggest that the arrangements for the remission of charges are not sufficiently well known to parents or that the income scales in use may be unduly severe.”

The circular proposes an upward revision of scales.

To fix an income scale for general application is not easy. Pending the universal introduction of free dinners, it is suggested that the income scale for granting free meals be based on the L.C.C. scheme for scholarships. This scheme applies to children who remain at school after the age of compulsory school attendance. For those up to 16 years of age, where the parental income of one-child families is less than £300 per year, a grant of £6 is given. A deduction of £50 from gross parental income is allowed for each other dependent child. Parents earning less than £300 get a higher grant. As £300 is the maximum income qualifying for a grant where there is only one child in the family, this figure should be the guiding one for granting free school meals to children of all ages at school.

To raise the school meals to 50 per cent of the school population has meant a great strain on the organisation concerned in providing equipment and the necessary space. There now arises the problem of how to increase the number of children taking meals at school, paying due regard to economy of space and expenditure and yet ensuring good meals. In communal catering it is usually preferable to cook in small individual kitchens associated with the dining halls, rather than to rely on central cook-

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ing and on meals transported in insulated containers. During the war, the central kitchen principle was adopted by a large number of education authorities. This method saved space, and economised in staff.

The *Nutrition Bulletin* for May, 1948 (Central Council for Health Education) gives a third method. It describes an experiment being carried out in Sheffield, where a policy of centralised preparation and decentralised cooking is being tried. The food is prepared but not cooked in a central depot. It is then transported to small kitchens, where the cooking takes place.

This method would certainly increase the number of meals that could be provided with a minimum of space and staff and would facilitate satisfying the total effective demand, which is officially estimated to be 75 per cent of children attending school.

As to the contents of the school meals, great care is taken to provide the children with a balanced diet. Provision is allowed for ingredients leading to good health and yet satisfying the children. More attention, however, might be given to drinking water, which is such a help to the digestive processes. Before the war, at one school feeding centre I visited, there were tables for four, with tablecloth, flowers, a jug of water and tumblers. There may be difficulties at the present time in introducing tumblers. Sufficient taps should be installed in the playground or school building so that children may have water in hot weather without forming too long a queue.

MILK

There has been a tendency for public attention to be devoted to the necessity of feeding town children, and assuming that because country children live amidst growing vegetables and other foods they have a sufficiency of foodstuffs. That this is not so was brought home at a

meeting of the Children's Nutrition Council before the war by a delegate from a rural branch of a Co-operative Women's Guild. She told the story of Susannah, her husband and daughter, who were picking raspberries. The daughter every now and then popped a raspberry into her mouth. The mother scolded her. But the father remarked: "Susannah! You should remember the biblical injunction, 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox, when he treadeth out the corn.' "

A striking confirmation of this was experienced in Taunton during the war.

Children, both local and evacuated, in some village schools in milk-producing Somerset, were not getting the benefit of the school milk scheme. This was reported to the Executive of the N.U.T. by the Taunton and West Somerset Evacuated Teachers' Sub-Association. The Union raised the matter with the Milk Marketing Board. The Board investigated and found the margin allowed for distribution was not enough to supply schools in outlying villages. The allowance was increased by 1d. per gallon. Not only did the village children and evacuees of Somerset benefit by this action, but many more children in the country as a whole. Mr. Charles Pearce, L.C.C., general secretary of the London Teachers' Association, assisted greatly in this extension of milk to rural schools.

Whereas prior to August 6th, 1946, children paid for the milk drunk in school at the rate of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per third of a pint, and could have two-thirds of a pint per day, milk is now provided free, and each child is limited to one-third of a pint per day. Every child in the class drinks the milk. The number of children having milk in school for London on a day in February, 1947, was 263,000, being 90 per cent. For the country, the figure given for a day in October, 1946 was 93 per cent. On a day in June, 1948, the London figure reached 92.7 per cent.

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One-third of a pint is not enough for adequate nutrition. The Ministry of Health Advisory Committee on Nutrition, in *The Nutritional Value of Milk*, says children should consume from one to two pints of milk daily. The Technical Commission appointed by the Health Committee of the League of Nations endorsed this, although the quantity advised for children of 1-2 years was $\frac{3}{4}$ litre instead of the 1 litre recommended for older children. A litre equals $1\frac{3}{4}$ pints.

It is to be urged that milk in schools be increased to two-thirds of a pint. Children in the lower economic grades should receive such extra milk first.

APPRECIATION

There is no doubt that the tremendous improvements in school feeding are to a great extent due, not only to the Ministry of Education, but also to the efforts of the Children's Nutrition Council and investigators in bringing to the forefront the importance of an optimum diet for children.

Among the many advocates of improved school feeding in recent years, one should mention Sir John Boyd Orr—now a peer—whose monumental work, *Food, Health and Income*, provided the basis for education and action. After the war, Sir John continued his good work in his capacity as Director-General of the United Nations' Food and Agricultural Organisation.

The education officers, medical officers of health, scientists and welfare workers, who carried out investigations showing the relation of nutrition to physical and mental well-being, must have a feeling of satisfaction at such an outcome of their work as the School-feeding Clauses of the Education Act, 1944. It now remains to secure their full implementation.

East Suffolk Education Committee is to be congratu-

lated on being the first authority in this country to complete the provision of canteens at all its schools. It is the first area to provide a 100 per cent meals service for its children. It has every reason to be proud of its achievement—due to the fullest co-operation of the County Education Committee and the Ministry of Education. Above all, the close assistance of the teachers was of the greatest importance.

CHAPTER XV

THE HEALTH OF THE CHILDREN

“Scientific invention and discovery have shown us how to produce an abundance of material goods for all. We cannot accept a different standard of health for rich and poor. We must make all our children pass into one national standard of physique, and no longer regard as inevitable or the act of God an inferior physique for artisans and superior for professional classes, knowing that although inferior heredity plays a part, the difference is largely due to social failure to remedy causes within control and is therefore an index of national inefficiency.” (Dr. James Kerr, *Fundamentals of School Health*, H.M.S.O.)

It is generally accepted that bodily weakness and ill-health impede school progress, and a survey conducted by Sir Cyril Burt in London and Dr. B. R. Lloyd in Birmingham showed that physical illnesses are contributory factors towards educational backwardness. Physical defects are arranged in the following descending order, according to their influence on school work: defects of hearing; defects of speech; enlarged tonsils and adenoids; stunted growth; malnutrition; recurrent catarrh; organic nervous diseases, as chorea and epilepsy; a series of four or more illnesses, caused through germs entering the body; left-handedness; defects of vision.¹

How does the health of the children of Middle Row school in 1947 compare with that of the boys at Barlby Road in 1937? Here are some of the comparative figures showing the number of children who suffered from a particular illness prior to the respective investigation:

¹ Sir Cyril Burt, *The Backward Child*. (University of London Press, Ltd.)

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| <i>Illness</i> | <i>Middle Row on roll—31</i> | <i>Barlby Road on roll—26</i> |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Measles | 19 | 19 |
| Whooping cough .. | 11 | 16 |
| Chicken-pox .. | 9 | 5 |
| Scarlet fever .. | 5 | 4 |
| Bronchitis | 4 | 7 |
| Diphtheria | 2 | 3 |
| Mumps | 2 | — |
| T.B. suspect .. | 2 | — |
| Pneumonia | 1 | 3 |

From these figures, one could not say that there was in general much change in the total incidence of these illnesses.

Other ailments and defects suffered by my 1947 boys in the course of their lives were:

Teeth, 7 boys; skin, 4; squint, 2; ears, double mastoid operation, 2; mastoid, 3; discharging ears, 2; nasal catarrh, 1; tonsillitis, 4; tonsillitis and adenoids, 1; neck glands, 5; meningitis, 1; hernia, 1; nervous trouble, 4; epilepsy, 1; bad posture, 2; enteritis, 1; defective vision, 6; speech defects, 2; defective hearing, 1.

Montagu, up to the time of the investigation, when he was 11 years 2 months old, has had whooping cough, measles, diphtheria, scarlet fever, mastoid operation, pneumonia—several times, epileptic fits, neck gland defect, and squint. He was a premature baby and weighed 3 lb. at birth. During the year ending July 1946 he was absent from school for 20 weeks owing to illness.

Ronald, from birth to 1947—age 9 years 7 months—has had whooping cough, measles, diphtheria, chicken-pox, impetigo, tonsillitis, neck gland defect, bronchitis, and is nervous through bombing.

Sidney's birth was a difficult one, instruments being

used at the delivery. During his teething period he suffered from fits and was taken to hospital. In his third year he was operated on for a mastoid. While in hospital for this operation, he contracted measles, followed by pneumonia. During his fourth year he suffered from pneumonia again, and in 1939—the war year—was transferred to a hospital in Carshalton. A bomb dropped on this building and Sidney lost his speech from shock. He has been and still is receiving treatment for speech defect at a London nerve hospital. He speaks so softly that he can hardly be heard.

Three children were taking cod liver oil capsules daily, while one was given the oil emulsified by the school nurse. The three were charged 2d. per week for one capsule per day, and were given their dose by the teacher. The one who had the emulsion received it free. There seems to be some contradiction here. Further, to charge for supplementary health food is surely against the intention of the Act of 1944. The Minister of Education informed local education authorities that as from April 1st, 1945, comprehensive facilities for free medical treatment were to be made available for all children at primary and secondary schools. Although the charge of 2d. can be remitted by the Care Committee, payment for cod liver oil should be generally discontinued.

The health analyses show a high incidence of illness, and indicate both the need to prevent further deterioration in the health of these boys, and the necessity to apply such measures to younger children as will ensure better health.

Reference to the section on school attendance will show that ill-health is the greatest contributory factor to absenteeism, leading in turn to lessons missed and to educational retardation.

Acknowledgment is due to Sir Allen Daley, School

Medical Officer, for arranging a special examination of my boys, who had not recently been medically examined.

The L.C.C. inspectors' recommendation, made before the war, that all backward children should be medically examined, has now become law. The Ministry of Education specifically mentions that children in ordinary schools needing special educational treatment shall be medically examined, and special attention to this rule is drawn in the L.C.C. bulletins.

At the periodic medical examination, the school doctor is asked to assess the nutritional state of the child. Until a year ago children were placed in one of four categories—1 for "excellent"; 2 for "normal"; 3 for "sub-normal"; 4 for "bad". An improvement in this classification has been effected in that doctors are now asked to place children into one of three categories—A for "good"; B for "fair"; C for "poor".

There should be only two categories—A—"satisfactory—as good as possible"; B—"unsatisfactory—not as good as possible".

Of the 31 boys in the class, six were considered A or "good"; 23 were B or "fair"; two were graded C or "poor".

Up to the present time no scientific method is used in schools for assessing general condition or nutrition.

The report of Sir Arthur McNalty, Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education, issued at the end of December, 1938, states that one in ten of Britain's school children are below the recognised "normal" standard of nutrition. He points out that the absence of a satisfactory standard of normal nutrition explains the many divergent returns of the nutritional conditions of elementary school children.

There is a danger, particularly in a uniformly poor area, that the "average" nutrition of children inspected will

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gradually come to represent the "normal" or perfect standard to the observer, whether he be teacher, doctor, nurse or even parent, and doubtful cases will be passed, or failed in relation to a standard itself subnormal. It would be advisable for teachers, doctors and nurses to be moved round from a poor district to a wealthy one periodically to get a better idea of an optimum standard.

In view of Sir Arthur's reference to the absence of a satisfactory standard of nutrition, the following account of a paper read by Mr. Huws Jones to the Royal Statistical Society is given here.¹ Mr. Jones analysed the assessments of different medical officers upon the same children. He also presented assessments of the doctors upon these children when re-examined after a short interval. The results of his work show how unreliable were the figures published by the Board of Education on malnutrition in this country. Four experienced medical officers of the Liverpool Education Committee were given the task of assessing the nutritional state of a number of children on a superficial or clinical examination only. While one doctor stated that 17 boys were of excellent nutrition, another found only one could be placed in this class. In Category 3, or "subnormal", the results varied from 24 to 38 boys, while three doctors placed one boy in Class 4, or "bad", and a fourth officer estimated that five could be placed in the poorest class.

Similar experiments were conducted in other schools of Lancashire, Cheshire and Breconshire. In Cheshire, five doctors examined 200 children on two occasions, a week apart. Extraordinary differences of opinion were observed, perhaps the most striking being that whereas one doctor placed only three boys in the "subnormal" group, another thought 90 should be placed in this group. Further, the proportions placed in the different nutritional

¹ R. H. Jones, *Journal of Royal Statistical Society*, Vol. CI, 1938.

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categories by each doctor differed considerably after a lapse of only one week. All of them placed many more in the "excellent" class at the end of the week and, with one exception, many fewer in the "subnormal" class.

Nutritional anaemia cannot be judged by appearance only. The haemoglobin content of the blood is perhaps the best guide. In a special investigation in which the haemoglobin of the blood was determined in two groups of children:

- (a) in a routine medical inspection group;
- (b) in a group selected because of poverty to be given supplementary milk;

75 per cent in the first group showed a haemoglobin value over 70 per cent; and only 51.5 per cent in the second showed a haemoglobin value over 70 per cent. For a healthy child, the value should be at least 90 per cent. (G. W. N. Joseph, S.M.O., Warrington, 1935.)

Among other tests, it is recommended that the haemoglobin content of the blood should be one factor in determining nutritional standard.

All connected with the health of children might remember that a healthy child has a natural resistance against disease germs and infectious agents. Medical workers tend to forget that the most important of all preventive measures is the maintenance of good general health by means of fresh air, exercise and adequate nutrition.

HEIGHT AND WEIGHT

It has long been recognised that the growth of a child is an indication of the state of his health. The Ministry of Education has for many years compiled statistics relating to the height and weight of school children. The L.C.C. before the war weighed and measured their chil-

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dren twice a year and careful records were kept. Where a child was not making satisfactory progress, the school nurse would report to the doctor, who would specially examine him. The war has disrupted this work, but it is gradually being put into practice again.

The importance of physique is stressed by Friend and Bransby:

“There seems to be no doubt that the great bulk of the adolescent population is not growing to its full potential. If proper growth is an indication that a child is in good health and consequently better able to resist illnesses of different kinds, it is interesting to speculate to what limits illness rates would be reduced if the environmental conditions were such as to enable the full potential physique to be achieved.”¹

In assessing whether a child is big enough for his age, there is a tendency to compare him with the children around, or with an average for the country as a whole. In determining normal body temperature, the standard figure is reached by excluding sick people. So in fixing what are standard weight and height, one should take into account such physique as would be reached by the children of the country if they were fed on the best food available and given the best homes and environment possible.

Further to demonstrate this point, tables have been prepared showing the comparative measurements of my present class with those of Barlby Road boys of 1937 and also with those of boys of a good social stratum in Hendon, who were weighed and measured in April, 1947. The Hendon figures are supplied by Dr. A. F. Adamson, the local Medical Officer of Health, through the good offices of Dr. J. C. F. Haines, Principal Assistant Medical Officer of the County Council of Middlesex. Figures have been reduced to the average age of my boys in each year group.

¹ “Physique and Growth of Schoolboys”, *The Lancet*, Nov. 8, 1947.

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The ages are given in years and months—9/8 years representing 9 years 8 months.

HEIGHT (inches)

| | | 9/8 years | 10/5 years | 11/3 years |
|-------------------|----|-----------|------------|------------|
| Barlby Road, 1937 | .. | 50.4 | 52 | — |
| Middle Row, 1947 | .. | 51.5 | 53.1 | 54.5 |
| Hendon, 1947 | .. | 53.2 | 53.9 | 56 |

It will be observed that the 1947 boys of North Kensington are approximately one inch taller than boys of the same age in 1937, but are shorter than boys from a better social class by 1.7 inches in the nine-year, 0.8 inches in the ten-year, and 1.5 inches in the 11-year group.

WEIGHT (pounds)

| | | 9/8 years | 10/5 years | 11/3 years |
|-------------------|----|-----------|------------|------------|
| Barlby Road, 1937 | .. | 60.7 | 66.3 | — |
| Middle Row, 1947 | .. | 64.4 | 69.5 | 72.2 |
| Hendon, 1947 | .. | 66.4 | 69.5 | 75.0 |

In weight, Middle Row boys in 1947 are about $3\frac{1}{2}$ lb. heavier than the Barlby Road boys of 1937, and while my ten-year-olds of today weigh the same as Hendon boys, the nine-year-olds are two lb. lighter and the 11-year olds are over three lb. lighter than corresponding boys of the better social and economic class of Hendon.

The improvements in physique of the North Kensington boys can be ascribed to:

1. increased income and security of employment resulting from the war;
2. food rationing, sufficient money to purchase adequate foods, and the phenomenal increase in school feeding.

There is no doubt that the better feeding at home and

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a balanced meal in school have had their effects in improving the physique of our children.

These figures will bear comparison with those of Dr. E. R. Bransby of the Ministry of Health. He showed, as a result of data from the annual reports of 21 school medical officers, that between pre-war and 1944 there was an increase of $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in the height and $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 lb. in the weight of school children.¹ A similar calculation from data collected by the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health showed that between 1940 and 1945, for children aged 9 to 14 years, there was an average increase of about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in height, and 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. for boys and 3 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ lb. for girls in weight.

There is ample evidence to show that environmental factors govern growth.

Sir Allen Daley states in the *Medical Officer* for May, 1944, that height and weight figures for the boroughs of London show that the children in better-circumstanced boroughs were generally above, and those in poorer boroughs were generally below the measurements representative of the whole country.

Further, Sir Allen Daley, in the same journal (June 5th, 1948), shows that children in the suburban residential districts of the south-west of London, weighed and measured in 1947, improved, on an average, 0.88 lb. in weight and 0.8 in. in height over the 1938 figures. The 1947 averages for industrial East End boroughs, which suffered severe war damage, do not show the same improvement. The average increase in height for both boys and girls is about 0.4 in. above 1938, while the pre-war standard in weight has been maintained.

One must conclude that, while there has been improvement in the physique of the children of North Kensington,

¹ *Monthly Bulletin of the Ministry of Health and the Emergency Public Health Service*, March, 1946.

they have not reached that standard of physical stature which further improved conditions would give them.

THE SCHOOL CLINIC

Up to February, 1945, children suffering from minor ailments or accidents were sent from the school to the L.C.C. Treatment Centre, Tavistock Road, off Portobello Road, for treatment. Children, sent as patients, spent the greater part of a school session or did not return to school. Truants gave attendance at the clinic as the reason for their absence. To obviate these abuses, and to reduce lapse of time between illness and treatment, the L.C.C. opened a medical clinic on the school premises at Middle Row at the beginning of 1945. A nursing sister is in daily attendance. One day each week is set apart at the Tavistock Road Treatment Centre for the doctor to see Middle Row cases referred to him. The number of cases treated per week varies from 100 to 130, involving 350 to 450 attendances every week.

The advantages of having the clinic in the school building are:

1. Contagion is prevented—impetigo, for example, is treated in its early stages.
2. Danger of infection is diminished—sore throats are examined and referred to doctor.
3. Minor injuries are treated immediately.
4. Septic sores are quickly cured.
5. Absenteeism is reduced.
6. Good organisation means minimum time out of the classroom.
7. Contact and co-operation of children and parents with the medical staff are more readily ensured.

Here are some details of my boys who went to see Sister in May, 1947:

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David: discharging ear—referred to doctor.

Simon: eyes—blepharitis—vitamin tablets.

Stan: discharging ears—cod liver oil emulsion—referred to doctor.

Donald: warts—treatment.

Henry: abrasion.

William: teeth—Care Committee to arrange appointment with dentist.

Ronald: abrasion.

Harry: teeth—Care Committee for dentist's appointment.

This clinic is highly successful.

Burt, in *The Backward Child* (University of London Press) says that not only medical but social measures are required to help children. Physical defects are sufficiently numerous to make it desirable that every backward child should be medically examined, and that every backward class should be under medical supervision. Home conditions, too, should be improved. He recommends a stay in the country of six to twelve months and stresses the importance of open-air classes and camp schools. These remedies should be applied as soon as backwardness is discovered.

CHAPTER XVI

LEISURE

"The fact that so many children should, week in, week out, find life so dull that they are willing, even on the finest of mornings, to immerse themselves in a darkened room, there passively to submit to being amused, is no doubt an unhealthy sign. The real solution, therefore, is to be sought in the provision or encouragement of some alternative occupation for the children in their leisure time. Children prefer active forms of recreation—to run about and play games, to make things, to do something. If sufficient facilities to do these things were available in the neighbourhood, fewer would choose the Saturday morning cinema. The ideal would, therefore, seem to be to provide ample alternatives of the kind mentioned. For example, places where children could play organised and unorganised games, both indoor and outdoor; where they could read, act, paint; places equipped with workshops and workrooms, where both boys and girls could make things—in a word, real children's clubs; more recreation grounds where the older boys and girls could play football, cricket, tennis, netball and other games, where the little ones could amuse themselves in sand pits and on swings." (*Children and the Cinema*", L.C.C. Minutes, July 27th, 1948.)

IN order to discover what interested the boys most after school and what constituted their activities, they were questioned orally and set written and drawing exercises. A "Draw what you like" exercise is a very useful one. It gives play to the child's imagination and reflects his interests at the time. One day, nine children drew pictures of cowboys; obviously due to the local cinemas and comics. On another occasion, ten boys drew pictures of boxing bouts. This followed a greatly publicised boxing

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contest. Other subjects illustrated by more than two boys in the same lesson were boats, motor-cars and football.

They drew during another lesson pictures of the work they would like to do when they were men. The resulting choice was as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 8—drivers | 1—fireman |
| 3—engine-drivers | 1—coal-miner |
| 3—air-pilots | 1—docker |
| 3—builders | 1—road surface worker (tarring) |
| 3—sailors | 1—soldier |
| 2—boxers | 1—motor policeman |
| 1—seller of second-hand goods | 1—engineer |
| | 1—engine fireman |

Only four lads wanted to follow father's calling.

The inquiry on activities outside school was difficult to complete, because boys were absent from school during the week of seven days which were devoted to this part of the investigation. Gaps had to be filled in during subsequent weeks. Figures show where an item is mentioned more than once, unless the one occasion refers to something outstanding. The figures refer to the number of boys naming a particular activity:

OUTDOOR GAMES: Football, 17 boys; cowboys, 8; toy cars, 3; fishing, 1.

INDOOR GAMES: Ludo and similar dice games, 13; cards, 9; boxing and wrestling, 4; toys, 4; draughts, 2; gambling, 1.

WIRELESS: Dick Barton, 25; Just William, 10; Children's Hour, 1.

CULTURAL PURSUITS: Reading, 10; drawing and painting, 3; scrapbooks, 2; stamp collecting, 1; teaching younger brother to read, 1.

CINEMA: Saturday Odeon Club, 14; other cinema shows, 14.

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The total number of visits to cinemas by these boys was 44. Of the 31 boys, nine did not go to the cinema at all; seven went once; eight went twice; and seven boys went three times, during the week of the investigation. On the Saturday, two boys went to the Odeon Club show in the morning and to an adult performance later in the day.

PARTIES: Birthday, 3; Borough Council Employees, 1.

HELPING PARENTS and others: Errands, 9; chores, 7; getting papers, 3; looking after shop, 1.

VISITS AND SHOWS: Relatives, 9; pantomime, 3; Madame Tussaud's, 1.

DOING NOTHING: 1.

MEMBERSHIP OF ORGANISATIONS:

Religious: Sunday School or Church, 17.

White Crusaders Boys' Movement, 3

Band of Hope, 3

Mission, 3

Young Sowers' League, 1

Other Organisations:

Play Centre, 5

Scouts, 3

Eight mentioned no organisation, while some said they belonged to two or three.

More than half the boys do some work after or before school for which they get a few coppers. This ranges from shopping for a neighbour to sweeping a garage or stable.

The activities outside school having most influence on and reflecting the lives of these boys are: outdoor games—football; cinema—Saturday Odeon Club; wireless—Dick Barton and Just William; membership of organisations—mainly religious; reading; visiting relatives.

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HOME READING

Enquiry was made into the reading of the boys apart from school reading. Nine belong to the Public Library. The others were asked why they did not belong to the Library. Six said it was too far away; one was stopped having books because his hands were dirty; one said the books were too hard; and one did not like the Library. Of bound books, eight liked adventure stories; four preferred fairy tales; and three chose school stories. During a class visit to the Public Library, one boy asked whether there was a section of easy books. The Librarian raised the question with the Kensington Borough Librarian, who gave the assurance that a specially trained children's librarian would be appointed after the summer holiday of 1947. Of periodicals: four boys said they read the morning newspaper; two read *Punch*; 17 bought *Beano*; 15, *Dandy*; 9, American comics; 5, *Film Fun*; 4, *Radio Fun*. Under wise direction, comic and other children's papers could be used to serve educational purposes and social well-being. Children's reading is greatly influenced by that of their parents. In the Middle Row area, newspapers seem to be the main reading interest of the parents concerned. The last ten years has shown a marked improvement in this respect. In 1937, only the *Football Star* or racing news was read. Now, interest also centres round the news. Of the morning papers, those with the highest frequency of mention by the boys were: *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Herald*, *Daily Express*, *Daily Graphic*, *News Chronicle*. Of evening papers, the *Star* was the most popular.

The importance of reading in the home is stressed by Mr. A. J. Jenkinson, in *What Boys and Girls Read* (Methuen). He writes:

"It is clear that many teachers of English are handicapped

by the poverty of their pupils. The reading habit grows and hardens into a shallow pastime because the printed material which goes into poor homes is of a debased and debasing kind. The senior school teacher is fighting more than the restraints of poverty; he is fighting its active corruption. The poor are not simply deprived of the best, they are exposed to the worst, constantly and with little mitigation. The difference between senior and secondary school¹ boys' reading records is clearly to a great extent a function of the supply of books in their homes and at their schools."

To counter the deficiency of wider reading in the homes of the boys, the class paid a weekly visit to the North Kensington Public Library. The Chief Librarian kept his promise, to which reference was made above. A newly-appointed qualified Children's Librarian, together with competent assistants, was there to help the boys.

From the outset, the Librarian, Miss B., showed her interest in and understanding of the particular needs of these children. She spoke to them about the purpose and contents of a Public Library and the significance of books and how to treat them. Always she saw to their comfort; arm-chairs were at the disposal of the boys. Here are some extracts of the children's opinions after such visits:

"I think it good to go to the library, because if you are a bad reader you can pick a good book and teach yourself to read. I have two very good books."

"I enjoyed myself at the library. There are all kinds of books. Some we cannot take home, but can look at in the library. There are pictures under the glass tops of the tables."

"You can pick easy books or hard books. I chose a book about railways."

¹ Term used prior to Education Act, 1944

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THE CINEMA

Of leisure pastimes, the cinema is attractive to children. The Odeon Clubs on Saturday are very popular and the evening shows attract the young, irrespective of the type of films. They contrive to get in for "A" films, whether brought by an adult or not. One mother wrote me: "Will you kindly give William a lecture? He takes his brother to the pictures every night. Therefore they cannot get up in the morning to go to school."

What concerns us in the extensive cinema-going of children are the effects upon their minds and subsequent actions. Once again we quote Sir Cyril Burt in *The Subnormal Mind*, where he says:

"The most serious danger from the cinema lies in its more subtle and elusive influences. The usual picture-house programme presents to the child a grossly perverted view of human life, and false but cheaply fascinating ideals. Existence is depicted as an almost unceasing round of excitement, frivolity and fun. Intrigue, flirtation, lawless enterprise and adroit deceit are set before him, surrounded with a halo of fictitious glamour. The love-interest, generally in its most sensational form, dominates nearly every programme. Almost inevitably, the child acquires a precocious familiarity with sexual affairs and becomes acquainted with distorted if not degraded standards of morality and conduct."

The films of today are sadistic in the extreme. The *Observer* critic, C. A. Lejeune, writes, on June 29th, 1947: "The more I see of modern pictures, the more I am horrified by the mood of ugliness and dolour that seems to have settled over them like a pall. It seems as though violence, brutality and sordidness were the only stimuli that brings the director of today to a full demonstration of his powers. Unless he is slapping his actors about,

beating them up with knuckle-dusters, banging their heads against the furniture, or discharging half a dozen bullets into their recumbent bodies, he does not seem able to relax or be happy."

It is this kind of picture that children see. One must not be surprised if their games are mainly of a gangster nature.

Children's tastes in films have been ascertained by the proprietors of the Granada Cinema Saturday morning shows. The audiences were made of boys and girls from seven to 15 years of age. A decided preference was found for historical films, and the reason for this preference seemed to be that films based on history offered more scope to the imagination of children than the average adventure film. The order of popularity was history, comedy, cartoons, thrillers, serials and adventure stories. News-reels were popular, but children were bored with love scenes.

Children, too, like good documentary reporting made up into a story. Truth can beat Hollywood invention for excitement and interest, just as a good newspaper reporter can beat the writer of trashy novelettes.

It is good to know that the Government has appointed a Committee to consider and report upon the effects of cinema attendance on children under the age of 16 with special reference to children's cinema clubs.

At the British Film Institute Conference in 1936, Mr. Sidney L. Bernstein gave three reasons for Saturday morning shows:

1. They created a "picture-minded" generation, by providing a "nursery for film-goers". He wants the habit of picture-going to be ingrained in the young, like that of reading.
2. They earned the good will of the parents, who want their children out of the way and entertained on Saturday mornings.

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3. They kept children away from Saturday adult performances, when these young people tend to be a nuisance. An economic factor is also involved. Children only pay half price. This is bad business for the owners when the seats can be sold to grown-ups at full admission prices.

In other words, the Odeon Clubs are run to make children "Odeon" minded, and to patronise these cinemas when they grow up so as to return dividends for the promoters.

It must be recognised that children love films and will go to cinemas whatever is shown. It seems then that we must ask who is to produce suitable films and how are we to get them shown once they exist. It is essential that if this country is to have films suitable for children, then the making and showing of films must be supervised by responsible organisations.

In view of the important place that films take in the lives of children, some alternative to the commercial films should be provided and film appreciation taught. The best places for this are the school and the cinema when a suitable film is being shown. Films are a useful adjunct to teaching methods. They help in the development of culture and knowledge, and to some extent compensate the poorer children for their lack of travel and narrowness of horizon. When projectors are so scarce, schools attended by children of the lower economic groups should have priority in any allocation made.

WIRELESS

After the films, wireless is probably second in its attractiveness and influence on children. As I have previously mentioned, 25 boys listen to "Dick Barton", ten to "Just William" and one to the Children's Hour.

The boys' games reflect the effect of the cinema and of

serials like "Dick Barton". In the playground, in the street, in the home, play which involves imaginary shooting is predominant. One class of boys acted a play made up by themselves. Within two minutes of the start, the two gangs, into which they had organised themselves, were stretched flat on the stage. All had been "shot".

The head-teacher of a junior school in the Isle of Wight told her Parent-Teacher Association that the character of Dick Barton was responsible for much torn clothing and minor injuries among her charges. Dick Barton badges—a shield roughly two inches square bearing that name on it—are displayed on a card in the shop-windows. The display card shows one car chased by another, one man on the running-board of the first car shooting at the occupants of the second, who return the fire.

Here is an account of one instalment—Barton and his pals set off to trek through Africa in search of a lost people with the object of stealing their "Godstone"—a bit of mineral with radio-active properties and of great money value. The "lost" people had conveniently learnt English as a language from a traveller in the thirteenth century. The villain was the high priest, who tried to stop them. The beautiful woman ruler of the country fell in love with Barton and was willing to help him get the stone and betray her own people. An Englishman, who happened to get stranded among them and had become their trusted national adviser, was also ready to sell the people, who had carefully nurtured him, to the first of his compatriots to arrive. Barton's party was saved from committing robbery by finding another piece of the mineral. Without a qualm, he deserted his beautiful benefactress.

There is, throughout, the assumption that it is quite in order to cheat a backward people and to treat women as chattels.

The broadcast programmes for schools are excellent.

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Dramatic interludes, combined with appropriate sound effects, help the listeners to understand the lessons. Experts are brought to the microphone and their direct approach to the children is often an inspiration. The past lives again, while poetry and dramatic reading become a pleasure. The children learn to listen consciously. Perhaps they also learn to combat the passive listening encouraged by the constant blare of background music and talk from the wireless set at home.

Sometimes an excellent broadcast is ruined by defective receiving apparatus. To meet this difficulty the London County Council are having a radiogram specially designed for schools. One has been allotted to this school.

MUSIC

The senses of music and rhythm are highly developed in these children, as is evidenced by their readiness to break into song and to dance. In their homes, the whole of my class have the wireless, except one, who said his mother could not afford to buy a set. Three homes had in addition a piano and a gramophone; one had a piano and piano accordion; four had a gramophone; and eight others had a piano.

When asked to sing individually at a class concert, the children break into cheap music of the crooning sort so often heard on the American films or on the wireless. As a result of the frequent plugging of these songs, the children memorise them, thus nullifying the effect of the teaching of good music in the schools. Once again, as with films, there seems to be no unity of aim between the education provided in the school and the material, including music, provided at that most popular place of entertainment, the cinema.

Recently, a new head master of Middle Row Junior School was appointed after the retirement of his pre-

decessor. He made an innovation, which was highly appreciated, not only by the brighter children of the school but also the backward ones. He took advantage of the scheme whereby arrangements were made for a group of students from the Royal Academy of Music to entertain the school. The artists were a pianist, a singer and a violinist. They played and sang pieces by Schubert, Mozart, Chopin, and Vaughan Williams.

This method of bringing good music to the schools is excellent and can instil the desire on the part of the children to learn to play musical instruments for their own pleasure and that of others.

The L.C.C. is also encouraging musical appreciation by subsidising the London Philharmonic Orchestra. £20,000 has been voted for this Orchestra and twenty concerts have been arranged for 44,000 school children. Each item will be introduced by Dr. Leslie Russell, the L.C.C.'s musical adviser, who has chosen the programmes together with the Orchestra. Schools may use gramophone records, available on loan, so that the children may have adequate preparation before the concerts. These performances are given in school time. The L.C.C. might in the future arrange programmes for the junior schools. Another excellent move has been announced. The L.C.C. is to buy 1,000 violins, 120 violas and 20 'cellos for London schools. Ernest Read's orchestras hold their concerts for children on Saturday mornings. Municipal authorities, too, are to play their part in the development of musical taste in adults and children. Under a new clause in the Local Government Bill of 1948, they will be able to spend up to a sixpenny rate in promoting concerts, gramophone recitals, dances and amateur activities of all kinds. They will also have the power to build or buy theatres, concert or dance halls, and to maintain a band and an orchestra.

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The London Branch of the Musicians' Union set up a Music Development Committee. This committee found that many councils outside the L.C.C. were organising concerts and dances and the losses, if any, were small. Croydon organised four Symphony Concerts for children on Sunday mornings. All tickets were sold out in advance. In Hornsey, when school children were asked to apply for sixpenny tickets in advance for the first concert, 2,300 applications were received.

There is room for more concerts for children, particularly for the younger age groups, both in schools and in halls, to be organised not only by voluntary bodies, but also by education authorities in school time and by the local councils out of school.

Children should be encouraged to become active makers of music. Lessons in playing the piano, violin and other instruments could be given in play centres and in clubs as well as under school supervision. School recorder bands are proving very successful. The danger of always being the passive recipient, always listening, always watching, whether it be a film, the radio or a football match, must be counteracted. The child who learns to sing well and to master an instrument, however imperfectly, achieves a large measure of happiness and satisfaction.

CHILDREN'S PLAYS

Tell a class of children, boys or girls, young or old, nursery school or secondary school, that they can act a play, and you will see them spring to new life. The making and dressing up of puppets, the adaptation and writing of playlets and the subsequent puppet show bring out and develop their skill, imagination and dramatic talent in the classroom.

In my own class, in the course of the project of the

Post Office, the children were told about brave Pheidipedes, the Marathon runner. No lesson was more popular than that in which this story was acted, first in the classroom, then on the hall stage.

Quite a number of children's theatres and theatrical groups are springing up. Toynbee Hall, London, is the scene of many a children's play and many an appreciative children's audience. Among such companies are the Young Vic, the Cygnet Company, the Glyndebourne Children's Theatre, the St. Marylebone Children's Theatre Company, and a number of similar enterprises in the provinces.

One particularly enjoyable performance was during the summer holiday of 1946 in Devonshire. The arrangements were in the hands of Brian Way of the West Country Children's Theatre, Bristol. They were a travelling group and performed a number of short sketches and mime, including "A Harlequinade" by Kathleen Hilditch, "Noah's Ark" from the Chester Pageant, "The Deluge", "The Toy Shop" by Valerie Long, and "Tweedledum and Tweedledee" from "Alice Through the Looking Glass" by Lewis Carroll. Wherever possible, children from the audience came up to the stage to play their part. Miss Jean Sterling Mackinlay presents matinées of a similar programme at Christmas-time in London.

The L.C.C., with the approval of the Ministry of Education, has inaugurated a scheme for presenting plays to children, but unfortunately they were confined in 1947 to secondary school pupils. Among the plays presented by the Glyndebourne management were, "Great Expectations", "Tobias and the Angel", and "She Stoops to Conquer". The London season lasted six weeks and performances were given at Toynbee Hall, Shepherd's Bush Empire, Camberwell Palace and Lewisham Town Hall. The first two plays mentioned were acted to

approximately 250,000 in London and the provinces. Members of the cast visited the schools after performances to get children's impressions and criticisms.

The generous attitude of the L.C.C. has made it possible to keep the Glyndebourne Children's Theatre on its feet, but why limit plays and performances to the secondary school? It is to be hoped that a number of plays will be performed suitable for the junior schools. Meanwhile, teachers feel that there is a great shortage of plays for younger children, which they themselves can act.

The performance of ballet, drama and opera for children, together with the special concerts of the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the Royal Academy of Music, form a unity leading to a discriminating and appreciative audience.

OPEN-AIR ACTIVITY

Football took pride of place in the interest of my boys and this applies both to activities outside school and inside school. In school, there are no facilities for football, but handball, a modification of football, is played. In the district there is no ground sufficiently large for a game, so what football is played is done in the streets. The more venturesome go to the Wormwood Scrubs on a Saturday. David is a keen cyclist and travels long distances.

During visits to the children's homes, Michael was riding a rusty cycle, with no saddle, no tyres and no pedals, while Dennis was kicking a ball about the street.

There is need for a piece of ground large enough for children to play games, and such land could be provided by the "Jack of Newbury" bombed site, which, cleared and levelled, would make a good playground.

Writing ten years ago, reference was made to the lack of travel in the lives of the children; not only lack of long-

distance travel, but also of short outings. The boys seemed to spend their time in their home districts, many never leaving the doorstep except to go to school. The consequent lack of first-hand experiences and narrowness of horizon results in a poor vocabulary, in poor physical health and in a general low level of culture and achievement.

Evacuation to Somerset in 1939 brought an entirely new world to the view of North Kensington children—apples growing on trees in apparently unguarded orchards, animals in the fields and all the rhythm of country life around them. It was difficult at first to learn to shut gates when passing through fields and especially to leave those apples alone.

The move to Bishop's Hull, near Taunton, was indeed an eye-opener to nine-year-old Beattie. During the Christmas holiday of 1939, the evacuees were to meet their teachers at the local recreation ground. It was raining one morning, and the children were sent home. But Beattie, a highly superior Cockney, was not eager to go home. She said to me: "Where are you going?" "To Taunton," I replied. "May I come with you?" I said she could. And Beattie waxed conversational on the way.

"You know, when I first came to Taunton, I thought the people would be different from us. But they are something like us."

"How are they different?" I asked.

"Well!" she answered. "The boy next door has a dog, and he thought I was frightened of it. So he said to me: 'Ee won't bite ee.' So I said to him: 'Vat ain't English', and he said: 'What art I to zay?' And I said, 'Ee won't bite cher'."

An interchange of London children and those from other parts of England would indeed be of mutual benefit and understanding.

The 1937 investigation showed that of 26 boys, 15 had never been away from home for a holiday. In the 1947 inquiry it transpired that out of 31 boys in the class, 11 had no holidays away; seven had odd days out; for example, a day trip to Southend; ten had a holiday of at least a week; three had lengthy stays in Convalescent Homes—one for personal illness, another while his mother was having a baby, and a third while mother was ill in hospital.

Of my 1947 class, Bill accompanies his father on long runs on a motor lorry, sometimes sleeping a night in the lorry. Bob has outings in his brother's car. Dick and three others of his family regularly spend their holidays with the Bagborough, Somerset, chauffeur with whom they were billeted during the war. This chauffeur and his wife are so attached to these children that they remarked: "When the children are not here, the house seems dead." William returns to Hertford, where he was evacuated, while Dennis spends his holidays in Cornwall, where his cousins stayed during the war. David goes to the Blackpool house where his father was stationed during the war. Mervyn goes camping to Weston-super-Mare with the White Crusaders' Movement.

To make good some of the deficiencies in the children's lives, arrangements are made annually for my boys to spend a day at Denham Court. This estate belongs to the Middlesex County Council, who have handed some acres to the Camping Club of Great Britain for the encouragement of youth in outdoor pastimes. Mr. Stephen Hilhouse, treasurer of the Camping Club, spends the day with us. The boys and girls experience a journey by trolleybus or train; a walk through the country; the erection of tents; a swim in a river; a talk on Nature; and after their lunch a cup of tea made on a camp fire. Mr. Hilhouse addresses the children on the pleasures of camping. For Middle

Row boys and girls, such a day is not only of physical and educational benefit, but also of social value. It is a training for leisure.

One mother came to see me about spending the summer holiday with the family at Denham. She had heard about it from the children.

Camping is encouraged by the Ministry of Education as an important summer activity for schools. The Ministry organises Camping Courses to give teachers and leaders experience and practice in the principles of camping in order that the highest standards may be maintained in camps. The students attending the courses live under canvas and take full share in all camp duties. In the Ministry's booklet, *Organised Camping*, local education authorities are asked to do their utmost to foster the growth of camping, particularly by acquiring new sites and equipment.

The Health of the School Child, the report for 1936 of Sir Arthur McNalty, Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education, states:

"If the world could be remoulded to our liking, every school would be an open-air school in a country or seaside setting, with ample facilities for playing-fields and the study of nature."

There are now two organisations which help schools to undertake School Journeys; the School Journey Association and the National Camp Corporation, Ltd. The first functioned long before the war, while the second developed as a result of preparation for World War II. These camps were erected in anticipation of a war and were to house evacuated children.

The School Journey was a regular event every year in my pre-war school. In my present school such a journey has been arranged for 1949. Besides the organised jour-

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neys to the country and seaside undertaken by schools, there are voluntary organisations that take children camping during the summer months.

CLUBS

The principal organisations catering for the children of Kensal New Town are of a religious kind, the most popular being the White Crusaders Boys' Movement. A uniform is provided and the boys have ranks as in the army. Apart from religious instruction, they have drill and marching.

At a neighbouring school there is an L.C.C. play centre where various games are played, indoors and in the playground. At the eastern end of the district there is the Feathers' Club, where children congregate.

Nevertheless, what is wanted is a club of a new kind. Large houses could be converted into children's clubs. Activities like drawing, dramatics, music, dancing and gymnastics could be encouraged. Here the individual child could find a niche, an interest, and a sympathetic supervisor. Older boys could have a workshop, where various hobbies could be encouraged. A proposal for such clubs was made in the 1947 report of the London Teachers' Association, by its Committee on Delinquency. These clubs might be maintained by the Co-operative Movement and the Trade Unions, as they are by these bodies in other European countries.

ART

In connection with leisure pursuits, I have mentioned most activities that might be encouraged in children, with the exception of art. Among my boys there were two—Colin and Sidney—who were exceptionally good at drawing in pencil, pen-and-ink and colour. If their level of reading and writing were at least up to normal

standard, they might both be recommended for an art school. Their next few years in the secondary school will determine their future career.

On this aspect of culture, the art inspectors of the London County Council have initiated a scheme for bringing prints and actual examples of works of art into the schools. These pictures were assembled at an exhibition in 1947 by the Society for Education in Art at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The plan is to circulate the pictures so that children will frequently see new ones. They should arouse interest and lead to discussion and appreciation of the work of great artists, past and present. At the time of writing, the pictures had not reached my school. Authorities should ensure that schools in poor areas should have prior consideration in the allocation of these pictures.

In the Children's Club advocated, special classes would be formed for the gifted in art as well as for those interested in music, dancing, modelling, physical training and other activities.

* * *

"Ninety-five per cent of young soldiers," said the Assistant Chaplain-General of B.A.O.R. recently, "are incapable of using their leisure. They have no hobbies and no interests."

This intensive survey of these children's leisure pursuits show there is no need for such a serious state of affairs to arise. The children are keen and eager to learn to occupy their leisure usefully and intelligently. It is for the adults to give them opportunities of doing so, in order that when they start out in the world, as young civilians, or as young soldiers, they have a sufficiently wide mental horizon to use their leisure well.

CHAPTER XVII

WAR

“Peace as a birthright—not a breathing space.” (International Women’s Day Committee.)

At the beginning of the war, the ages of these children ranged from 1 year 6 months to 3 years 11 months. Two attended a nursery school and were evacuated with the school; and one was at an infants’ school. Here is a summary of their war lives:

Period of evacuation:

| <i>Not at all</i> | <i>Less than 1 year</i> | <i>1 year</i> | <i>2 years</i> | <i>3 years</i> | <i>4 years</i> | <i>5 years</i> | <i>6 years</i> |
|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 12 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 |

Sleeping arrangements in London:

| <i>In own bed</i> | <i>Street Shelters</i> | <i>Basement</i> | <i>Anderson Shelter s</i> |
|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 6 | 7 | 6 | 1 |

COMMENTS:

Bob: His home was bombed and he suffered from shock.

Montagu: Had a fit after a buzz bomb and was in a very nervous state. He was sent to Cornwall to recuperate. This was his first visit to the sea. His mother did not think she would be able to afford another holiday for him.

Pat: Nervous of planes, afraid of the dark.

Ronald: Nervous. Parents protected children with own bodies against possible bombs.

BACKWARD CHILDREN IN THE MAKING

Sidney: In hospital for mastoid operation at the beginning of war. A bomb fell on the hospital. Sidney lost his speech. He attended a nerve hospital for years until his speech was regained.

Dick: Returns to his foster-parents in Somerset for his holidays.

William: Has spent two holidays with his foster-parents in Hertford since the war.

Dennis: Goes to Cornwall for his holidays with his aunt. She regularly visits the lady with whom her two sons were evacuated.

That children are the defenceless victims of war goes without saying. Grown-ups have the power to fashion the events of their land, but children have not. It is therefore right and proper that people in exercising their power should give thought to the effects of their actions on the children.

Mrs. Leah Manning, M.P., a former president of the National Union of Teachers, stated in Parliament in March, 1948, when Civil Defence against atomic warfare was being discussed:

"It is a shocking commentary upon our time that we should be sitting in this Chamber, less than four years after the achievement of total victory, deciding how we are going to protect our citizens against the terrible instruments of slaughter in the next war. This is indeed a tortured generation. Before we have drawn our breath after one war, we are getting ready to fight the next. Before we have built the houses which were destroyed in the last war, we are beginning to think how we should build shelters to protect our people from the next. Before the ink is dry, or indeed before we have even signed the Peace Treaties, we are rattling our swords in our scabbards and hurling abuse at one another across the ether. It is a terrible commentary on our times,

and how we can be expected to sit here and not feel any kind of emotion, while we discuss such things, I do not know. Maybe the men can do it, but I know the women cannot. . . .”

Mrs. Manning’s attitude to war is the only possible one for any who have the interests of the children of this country at heart. The mother of Colin ended a letter on her son’s war experiences as follows: “Let us pray for peace and the United Nations.”

While in the greater part of the Borough of Kensington the war-scarred buildings have been either renovated or demolished, Kensal New Town still retains its hideously damaged and dangerous buildings. These should be removed and any patches large enough—like the “Jack of Newbury” site, as has been indicated before—converted into a children’s playground.

The effects on the physical and nervous system of children who slept in shelters, and were subjected to the uncertainties of air-raids, are immeasurable. The constructive proposals made, if adopted, would help to overcome the deficiencies to some extent. But the lessons above all for the peoples to decide are that there shall be no more war; that the constructive and creative ability of scientists and their assistants shall be directed to the means for peaceful living.

CHAPTER XVIII

DELINQUENCY

“As most confirmed criminals began their careers in childhood, it is unwise to ignore such a valuable source of information about the environment in which they take their first steps in crime. It is essential that the home conditions of delinquents should be examined and made known; for of all the varied factors associated with delinquency, those relating to environment appear most susceptible to external influence and social progress.” (J. H. Bagot, M.A., *Juvenile Delinquency*. Jonathan Cape, Ltd.)

THERE is ample evidence to show that backwardness is directly related to delinquency. Sir Cyril Burt, in *The Young Delinquent* (University of London Press), states that 80 per cent of the cases investigated were dull and backward educationally. It should be remembered that only 10 per cent of London school children are placed in that category. Another figure to illustrate this is given. Of 3,000 juvenile police court cases examined, 40 per cent were seriously retarded in reading.

It is not to be wondered at that the Board of Education in its pamphlet on *Backwardness* writes:

“The social value of the work (the teaching of backward children) as a means of combating a dangerous source of delinquency is one that cannot easily be assessed.”

Here are cases in which the boys of my class did wrong and were caught by the police, but not all of them were charged. Seventeen boys were so caught out of 31 on the roll. The major offences were six cases of stealing from open-counter shops like Woolworth's; five cases of tres-

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passing in bombed houses; three of stealing fruit; one of trespassing in a park after closing time; one of stealing flowers from a park "for mother"; one of kicking a ball on the railway; one of breaking a lorry window with a stone; one of throwing stones; and one of stealing firewood. Donald is a special case and these are his exploits.

Donald got into bad company while Dad was in the Forces. In September, 1946, he "opped the wag"—played truant from school; took a ticket to Euston Station from Westbourne Park, and jumped a train to Watford. He wanted to visit "Aunt" in Northampton, with whom he had stayed for a holiday. He was spotted by an inspector, returned to Euston, then home to his mother and thrashed. The police called at his home and warned him. In the same month, with two other boys, he broke into a shop, and hid some plates under his jersey. A policeman in a car stopped him and asked what he had. He was taken to Harrow Road Police Station, detained two weeks at a Remand Home and reported weekly thereafter. He attends a Child Guidance Clinic for "play therapy".

Malcolm was put on a year's probation for stealing sweets. Tony's parents were fined £2 when the boy was seen stealing a lighter from the British Home Stores. In all other cases of misdemeanours, names and addresses were taken and the boys warned, as a deterrent.

Even from the facts stated above, it would seem that the police are very kind and understanding in their treatment of these delinquent boys. An interview with a C.I.D. officer of Harrow Road Police Station, who was responsible for investigating children's petty crimes, was very revealing. He said, "If I were a boy living in this district I should most certainly get into mischief. As a lad I was high-spirited; but, living in the country, I could go after a rabbit, climb trees, play football and generally wear off my surplus energy. These children live in over-

crowded tenements, have only bombed houses and un-cleared bombed sites to play on." It was also a police sergeant who, while on a visit to the school, noticed the great part of the playground taken up by air-raïd shelters. He used very strong language as to what he would do, if he, as a parent, lived in the district where there were almost no facilities for children to play. These shelters have since been removed.

The two offences most frequently committed by the boys in Kensal New Town district are shoplifting and trespassing in bombed houses. Of the first offence, we can echo Shakespeare's words in *King John*:

"How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds makes ill deeds done."

On the same subject, Sir Robert Gower, chairman of Tunbridge Wells Bench, in October, 1947, told a stores' detective who was prosecuting a young married woman for stealing articles valued at 5s.:

"We have come to the conclusion that the proprietors of these stores are to a great extent responsible.

"Nothing can justify anyone stealing, but we do feel, and rather strongly, that stores of the nature of yours do place almost irresistible temptation in the way of persons like the prisoner and others who have no great intelligence.

"The Bench require that an undertaking should be given by the stores that they will not place this temptation in the way of these unfortunate people."

The bomb-damaged buildings in this part of North Kensington are not only a source of potential delinquency, but also lead to serious accidents and death itself. In Kensal New Town, where there are insufficient playing-grounds and fields, children are tempted to play in them. I have seen children leave school and make straight for

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a bombed house. Accidents to children are also reported to the school authorities.

In 1946, ten-year-old Laurie Good fell to his death from one of these buildings in North Kensington, this being the third fatal accident of its kind in the district.

The question arises not as to what should be done, but as to who is responsible for remedying matters. It seems to be shared between the L.C.C. and the Metropolitan Boroughs. One body should be made publicly responsible for demolishing all buildings that are beyond repair, or buildings that are or may become dangerous. As already suggested, where the resulting sites are large enough, the ground should be levelled and converted into recreation grounds.

Unsettled marital relationship or loss of a parent often leads to delinquency in the children. As was analysed in the chapter on Families, there were ten such cases out of the 31 investigated.

The high incidence of delinquency among my boys who are in the younger age groups occurs in London as a whole. In a L.C.C. report of the Special Education Sub-Committee dated October and November, 1947, it is observed that while there was a general decrease in juvenile delinquency for the year ending March, 1947, there were disturbing increases in the age groups from eight to 12 years. The figures for the eight- and nine-year-olds are the highest recorded since the 1933 Act. The Report says: "It seems probable that we are now witnessing some of the inevitable consequences of the dislocation of family life during the war years."

In the discussion in the Report, Sir Percy Harris said he had always been very much in favour for many years of public authorities providing entertainment for the children. This was one way of counteracting the evil things of a child's mind engendered by always seeing

crime in the cinema. Very often these children are the most adventurous, the kind who might be useful citizens. Alderman E. J. Sainsbury urged the better use of leisure time and especially that the children be taught to read. Mrs. Corbett, who presented the Report to the Council, in her reply stated that a large proportion of the young offenders were normal children, who, if they had the right kind of homes, would become thoroughly good children.

Bagot of Liverpool found that the commonest things stolen were cash, food, clothing and sweets. The majority of the delinquents had very little pocket money and it was the desire to enjoy what others had that led to the stealing of money. The children had a great desire to go to the cinema. There was a reduction in delinquency during holidays in Liverpool, for children can travel to the outskirts for one penny on the trams.

Of overcrowding, Bagot says: "The proportion of families living in overcrowded homes is so high that this factor must at least be said to be strongly associated with delinquency and may indeed be one of the principal causative factors."¹

Bagot's findings in Liverpool are strikingly confirmed by J. A. F. Watson, chairman of the Southwark Juvenile Court, who says in *The Child and the Magistrate* (Jonathan Cape):

"Only if we dig deep shall we expose these basic factors and from them alone shall we learn that what matters is not the conduct of the child, but his social and mental background; poverty and slums; disease and drink; immorality; indifference to religion; each of them conducing to that most tragic of all a child's afflictions—a broken home. These are the roots of evil."

¹ J. H. Bagot, *Juvenile Delinquency*. (Jonathan Cape, Ltd.)

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Watson continues:

“But I do say most emphatically, not merely as a Juvenile Court Magistrate sitting one day a week in a poor district, but as a surveyor engaged all the other days—also in a poor district—in housing management, that *bad housing* is one of the root causes of nearly all our social ills.”

CHAPTER XIX

PARENTS AND TEACHERS

“The plan is no more than a means to an end. That end is the worthy education of the children of London, a process which depends for its fulfilment on human effort and the working together in a lively partnership of teachers, children and parents in close co-operation with the Council and its officers.” (*London School Plan*, 1947.)

LONDON schools in the past were surrounded by brick walls. Even the gates were panelled with metal sheets to keep out prying eyes. In truth, a curtain of iron and brick separated the school community from the busy life without. Parents rarely came to speak to teacher about their children, and when they did it was usually to make a complaint.

Today, the isolation of the school is breaking down. New buildings have an aspect open to the public. Wherever possible they are placed in more extensive grounds. The walls are less forbidding. School is becoming an inviting place and parents and teachers meet on a friendly basis. Many schools now have Parent-Teacher Associations and advantages accrue from these to everybody concerned. In many hundreds of Parent-Teacher Associations today, parents and teachers are getting together and discussing matters relating to the welfare and education of children and meeting in social activities which break down the barriers that previously existed between home and school.

Such an organisation is even more desirable and potent for backward and difficult children than for normal

children. Montagu's mother called one day. She wished to borrow an easy book for her son. Her husband could not read, she said, and therefore could not take a job which required a knowledge of reading and writing. She was teaching both husband and son to read. "I have made up my mind that at any rate Monty will read." She herself holds a post in the journalistic world.

One young teacher was examining his children when it was suggested he ask about the home conditions. The teacher (not a Cockney) came to me later and exclaimed: "Blimey! I never thought such conditions existed. This boy is sleeping four in a bed—the eldest being a girl of thirteen!"

Parents can help to secure more regular attendance at school, and as we have seen, irregularity is one of the greatest factors leading to backwardness. A discussion with parents on the advantages of such regularity would do more good than the repeated scolding of the children and the threat of legal action.

Now that school feeding is so common, teachers observe that some children will not eat certain foods. Some will not eat green vegetables or salads. During evacuation, one foster parent told me that when she cleared up the room after dinner she found in the fire grate behind the fire screen a newspaper rolled up containing the greens from the dinner. The children had never eaten greens at home. They did not want to upset their foster parent by leaving the food on the plate and so hit upon the plan of hiding what was left.

Some children do not like butter and their mothers do not purchase their butter ration. One mother assured me that she had no occasion to buy her margarine ration because she could always obtain butter in its place. Parent-Teacher Associations recognise the need for an understanding on the value of foods, and the Ministry

of Food in its campaign to get more mothers taking the Welfare Foods, sends films to meetings of Parent-Teacher Associations, and arranges for speakers and cookery demonstrations, which are both educational and interesting.

The publication *School and Life* strongly advocates the formation of Parent-Teacher Associations in the schools. Here are two quotations from that publication:

“Between the wars, whenever there was an economic crisis, education suffered through lack of popular support; it is essential that interest in the work of the schools should be stimulated, so that people do at least know what damage is done when cuts are suddenly imposed.”

“Our evidence shows also that popular apathy has not only acted as a brake when carrying out what the Acts laid down, but has helped to make education an easy target for economy drives.”

Parents and teachers realise this. The Home and School Council of Great Britain (the national federation of Parent-Teacher Associations) from their Conference on December 31st, 1947, sent a resolution on the implementation of the 1944 Education Act to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Ministry of Education. Its annual general meeting in May, 1948, decided to send a deputation to the Board of Trade on more paper for textbooks and exercise books. Some Parent-Teacher Associations are pressing local education authorities for more teachers and more classrooms in order to reduce the size of classes. Others by their action are getting canteens so that children may have school meals. Rural areas, such as a village in Norfolk, where 130 of the village population of 700 are members of the Parent-Teacher Association, are establishing a community spirit where the school is the pivot on which activity turns.

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The Minister of Education, Mr. George Tomlinson, in a broadcast appealing for the wholehearted co-operation of parents, teachers and local authorities in making the raising of the school age a success, said:

“To the parents of the children concerned I would appeal for their special co-operation. Teachers can do a great deal . . . but it is the real enthusiastic support of parents generally that is needed in all our educational work if we are to succeed. Let the children see that you think it is worth while. . . . Encourage them all you can. Enter into partnership with the teachers to make learning a joy instead of a task. Take an interest in what they are doing at school and never in any circumstances give them the impression that you don't care much about their work.

“Let us fashion our homes and organise our schools, with the well-being of the children always in mind. In particular, remember that any clash between parents and teachers must always be harmful to the child. Harmonious working together can alone bring us the results we want.”

The importance of closer relationship between parent and teacher was stressed at a gathering of the East London Teachers' Association by Mr. Basil Henriques, J.P., chairman of the East London Juvenile Court. During the course of his talk on “Juvenile Delinquency and the Teacher” he remarked that:

“We ought to be proud of our children; they are magnificent in the way in which, in spite of the unprecedented temptations brought about by the war, they have kept away from the Juvenile Courts. The teacher can and must help to prevent any rise in delinquency.”

To assist in the work, he asked for fuller and more accurate reports from head teachers, and pleaded for closer co-operation between the teacher and the parent,

as co-partners in the education of the child. He deplored the lack of Parent-Teacher Associations in London schools.

The number of such associations is slowly increasing. Certainly, in the progress of the Parent-Teacher movement, county areas such as Nottinghamshire, Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Warwickshire, with their large numbers of Associations, are setting good examples.

Teachers' organisations have expressed themselves generally in favour of Parent-Teacher Associations with certain safeguards—that participation of the teacher be voluntary; the Association shall not interfere with the internal organisation of the schools; and the committees shall be democratically elected. However, too much should not be asked of the teacher in too many fields. The right remedy lies in the increase of the staff and the reduction in the size of classes, in order to leave him the necessary time and energy to devote to the social needs of his pupils.

The L.C.C. encourages these movements and in an issue of the official bulletin for February 4th, 1948, there was the following notice:

“PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION—SCHOOL LETTINGS

“The free use of such school accommodation as may be required will be granted for meetings of Parent-Teacher Associations, not exceeding one a week, provided no charge is made for admission.”

The Home and School Council is the national body to which most Parent-Teacher Associations affiliate. Its main aim is to encourage co-operation between home and school in order to promote the welfare of the child and to obtain those conditions in home, school and community in which the child can develop satisfactorily. It gives advice and help in the forming of Parent-Teacher Asso-

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ciations, sends speakers on all subjects relating to child study and education, and also publishes pamphlets dealing with these matters.

The need for this coming together of parents and teachers should be stressed, particularly in areas of poor economic conditions.

CHAPTER XX

THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

THE outstanding and all-pervading event of the last ten years was World War II. This war has had its effects on the present generation of school children. Educationally, it appears as a result of comparing two small investigations, one in 1937 and the other in 1947 in the same district, that backwardness has largely increased. Stature has improved. On the nervous side I would say the effects are great. On the income side, as far as North Kensington families are concerned, the war period has meant stability of employment either in the Forces or outside, with a regularity of income not known since World War I. This has been reflected in better food and better clothing. School feeding has leapt ahead with a jump. While the homes of the people have deteriorated, families in the area under consideration have tended to be larger, leading to overcrowding. The problem of leisure has not been solved. Juvenile delinquency has increased and raised new problems.

There was a change for the worse towards the end of 1947. There were indications of temporary unemployment, less income, and a deterioration in living conditions, involving the amount of food and clothing per head of family.

To help our children overcome the deficiencies of the past and to build a better race of people, I append this summary based on the conclusions reached in the previous pages.

THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Peace—through the United Nations; and understanding in particular between the three principal countries of the world—Great Britain, United States of America and Soviet Union.
2. Income—every family should have an income which assures that standard of life advocated by Sir John Boyd Orr for healthy living.
3. Housing—the rehousing of the people to avoid overcrowding and to create an environment which will give full scope to the development of the children.
4. Food—the implementation of the Education Act, 1944, giving all children free school meals.
5. Health—the attitude to health should be positive and preventative, aiming at building a healthy body and not merely at treating ailments and defects.
6. Education—the reduction of backwardness and improving the educational level of the children by:
 - (a) A complete system of nursery schools.
 - (b) Parity of conditions between primary and secondary schools.
 - (c) Setting up comprehensive high schools.
 - (d) Reduction in the size of classes in all schools to a maximum of 30 on roll.
 - (e) Establishment of small classes of backward children.
 - (f) Raising the school-leaving age to 16 years.
 - (g) Priority in the reconstruction programme for school buildings.
 - (h) Publishing books suitable for the older, backward children.
 - (i) Providing opportunities for enjoying experiences first-hand by school journeys and visits.

BACKWARD CHILDREN IN THE MAKING

- (j) Supplementing such experiences by means of films and other educational aids.
7. Leisure and Culture—the establishment of children's parks, clubs and camps, and the further encouragement of good music, broadcasts, films and art for children.
 8. Parents and Teachers—the formation of Parent-Teacher Associations.
 9. Joint study groups of all interested in the development of backward children—teachers, medical officers, school nurses, psychologists and welfare workers.

With a large class of children in school, it is impossible for the teacher to make a thorough investigation into the environmental conditions of his pupils. But a teacher with a small backward class finds it necessary for the understanding of his children to make a study of each one. It may be that, just as new methods evolved in the teaching of backward children may lead to a new approach to normal and even bright boys and girls, so investigations such as those described in this book may lead to an exposure of the bad social conditions under which only too many of our children live. Teachers should be encouraged to delve into the lives of their pupils. They will thus get to understand them and help bring about those necessary social changes which will give the children the possibility of developing their powers to the full and make worthy citizens of a worthy country. By improving social conditions and maintaining peace the next ten years can be an era of Happy Children in the Making.

APPENDIX I

TEACHER'S INVESTIGATION FORM

MIDDLE ROW JUNIOR MIXED SCHOOL, W.10

Class 2B.

Spring 1947.

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Case Name | Name |
| Address | Date of Birth |
| Reason for placing in this class | |

I. FAMILY:

| | |
|----------|-------------|
| Father | War Service |
| Mother | |
| Brothers | |
| Sisters | |

Other relatives with family
No. in family living at home
Family deaths

II. HOME CONDITIONS:

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---------|------|
| Income | Rent | |
| Type of Accommodation | | |
| Living Room | | |
| Parlour or Front room | | |
| Bedrooms (1) | | |
| (2) | | |
| (3) | | |
| Bath | Water | W.C. |
| Lighting | Heating | |
| Yard | | |
| State of repair and cleanliness | | |

BACKWARD CHILDREN IN THE MAKING

Furnishing

No. of Units in Family
at Home

No. of Units as
per Rent Book

Child under 1 year = 0 unit. 1 yr. to 10 yrs. = $\frac{1}{2}$ unit.

Above 10 yrs. = 1 unit

III. FOOD:

Mother at home work Day of Enquiry:

Breakfast

Dinner

Tea

Supper

Supplementary Foods: School milk ($\frac{1}{3}$ pint)

IV. PHYSICAL RECORD AND HISTORY

Pregnancy

Birth

Illnesses

Height ft. ins. Weight st. lbs.

Compare for

same age with 1937 investigation:

Height ft. ins. Weight st. lbs.

School Medical Examination: Date

Vision

Teeth

Glands

Nutrition

Ears

Other defects

School Clinic Visits

Appearance and Clothes

Time to Bed

V. WAR PERIOD:

Age at beginning of War

Evacuation:

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

Schools attended

Effects

APPENDIX I

VI. PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINATION:

Mental Age Chronological Age
Intelligence Quotient Mentality
School Attendance (24 weeks from 6th October,
1947)
Reading Age classification:
Arithmetic Age classification:
Favourite School Subjects: (1) (2)
Special Abilities or Disabilities
Disposition
Interests: "What I should like to be when a Man"
 Indoors: (a) Reading
 (b) Wireless
 (c) Games
 (d)
 Outdoors: (a)
 (b)
 (c)
 (d)
 Organisation, Membership of
 Holidays
 Delinquency

VII. SUMMARY:

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS:

APPENDIX II

MILK AND ITS PRODUCTS¹

A CLASS PROJECT

Children from the crowded towns—boys and girls who had never seen the country—who thought that “milk came from the milkman”, have been uprooted from their life-long haunts and set down in surroundings utterly new to many of them. With change of environment should come change in the approach to their education. The writer, who for many years taught backward children in North Kensington, has been applying the teaching method he found so successful with slow pupils to the more normal children he now teaches in Somerset. This is based on the “environmental project”, and has for its aims the integration of home, school, and community life. The “environmental project” now being developed is “Milk and its Products”, since the school is in the heart of the dairy farms of Somerset.

The preparation of the unit devolves upon the teacher. In the ordinary routine of school life the material for lessons is always at hand in the books on the school premises. In the building of the unit on milk the teacher was brought in contact with the lives of many people around him, and by correspondence with numerous organisations having some bearing in the production and distribution of milk and its by-products.

Among the problems to be discussed were the place of milk in a healthy diet; the rearing of a cow; hand and machine milking; the composition of milk and the various

¹ Reprinted with permission from *The Times Educational Supplement*.

classes of milk on the market; its cleanliness; care of milk in the home; the life of a cowman; the distribution of milk from farm to home and the factory; the making of butter and cheese; plastics. How were all these aspects of the one subject to be tackled? Books on milk were obtained from the public library at Taunton. The National Milk Publicity Council and the Milk Marketing Board sent useful pamphlets and posters, the Children's Nutrition Council copies of their bulletins on the food value of milk and the schemes whereby mothers and children can obtain free or cheap milk as a result of recent legislation. The Co-operative Union dispatched toys and puzzle novelties relating to milk. An article on the subject opportunely appeared in the *Schoolmaster*. Two farms were visited by the teacher, who also spent a day at Cannington Farm Institute, passed a busy morning with the Chief Medical Officer of Somerset and members of his staff, had a talk with the West Country Organiser of the Agricultural Workers' Union, and some chats with local farm labourers. A talk with the Food Publicity Officer—a lady—provided the writer with the connection between Parliament, County Hall, and milk. Copies of Acts, Regulations, and forms were produced. She explained the different grades of milk—ordinary farm milk, accredited milk, tuberculin-tested milk—and the different standards of cleanliness required by law for each, and offered to give the children a demonstration with an exhibition of models of food and its classification, as well as the composition of milk. The County Bacteriologist explained bacteria and the tests imposed in his laboratories.

The day spent at the Somerset Farm Institute, Cannington, was full of surprises to the novice. Here one learned that a cheese-taster never tastes cheese; he smells it, rubs a piece between thumb and finger, and smells it again.

Watching milk being treated to make the much-sought-after Caerphilly cheese meant the passing of many enjoyable hours. The pasteurizing and bottling department of the Taunton Co-operative Society was visited by the children. Here they saw how the milk they drank at school was treated. After this visit, up went the demand for school milk.

The Somerset Education Committee, it should be mentioned, employ qualified dairying instructors to tour their elementary schools, so that most children over 11 in the county are instructed in a syllabus on milk covering bacterial life with examination of microscope slides; the production, use, and care of milk; and the making of cream, butter, and cheese. For boys and girls over 12 there is a visit to a farm, microscopic work is done, bacteria are incubated and slides prepared. Practice is also given on artificial udders. Each of these courses lasts a week.

The children on the milk project have already visited two farms. At the first, hand milking was the method used. Every care was taken to keep the milk clean. The back legs of the cow were tied. The cowman wore white overalls; their hands were frequently washed; the udders were cleaned in lime-water and wiped with a clean cloth; the stalls were scrubbed. One or two of the children came to grief on the three-legged stool. Watching a cooling machine, one girl wanted to know if the cold water mixed with the milk! At the next farm visited, machine milking was observed. This farm produced tuberculin tested milk, and the boys and girls could see with what scrupulous care this milk was obtained. Charts were kept of each cow's milk, and the animal was fed in accordance with the amount of milk given. Samples of the food given to the cattle were tasted by the children, who were allowed to take small quantities away. In addition to

explaining every detail of the dairy work, the farmer demonstrated practically why children should not swing on gates, or climb over them if unlocked, showing how the posts give with the weight of the body on the gate. He also explained the need to shut gates after passing through, and referred to the dangerous habit of throwing stones at animals. One of his sheep had been recently blinded in this way. The children appreciated this sidelight upon the life of the countryside, and it helped to establish good neighbourliness and understanding.

The children reproduced their impressions of these visits in both writing and drawing. One budding strip cartoonist was discovered. He drew two series of pictures. The first set showed (1) the cowman milking the cow, (2) the cow kicking the man, (3) the man tying the back legs of the cow. The second showed (1) the cowman pouring the milk in the cooler, (2) the man slipping, (3) the man falling in the bowl of milk on top of the cooler. After a visit to a place of interest or a lesson that particularly appeals, might not the children in the country regularly write letters describing their experiences to their friends still enduring the hardships in the towns so as to tempt them away to the quietness of the village?

The teacher used to stereotyped modes of work will find the building up of an environmental project such as here described a novel experience. It will tend to bring not only the children but also the teacher in harmony with his surroundings. It will introduce a new spirit into the school—that of the living productive world outside. It will broaden one's experience of mankind, and will provide that link between the community and the school which has perhaps been the missing link that in the past has made schools divorced from real life.

OTHER INVESTIGATIONS

A number of investigations and actual experiments with children have been carried out to show that there is a direct relationship between environment and educational development.

One such major piece of work was carried out in 1939 by R. M. Allardyce, Director of Education for Glasgow, on an extensive scale. The children of that city sat for an examination qualifying for secondary schools at the age of 12 years. The schools for the purpose of the investigation were divided into eight groups, according to the economic necessity of the families whose children attended the schools. The level of necessity was determined by the percentage of pupils receiving free milk at each school—ranging from zero to 70 per cent. Each of the eight groups provided about 2,000 pupils at the examination.

The aggregate mark for English and Arithmetic was 160. It was found that where the average necessity was less than 1 per cent, the average mark was 111. Where average necessity was below 6 per cent, the average mark was 102, and so on through the eight groups. In the group of schools where the average necessity was 62 per cent, the average aggregate mark was 76. An almost precise mathematical relationship was disclosed.

The investigators reached the conclusion, "That for any school, average attainment in English and Arithmetic at the qualifying stage is dependent on the average necessity of the school; as percentage necessity increases, attainment decreases." This shows the need to remove the cause of decreasing attainment by abolishing economic

necessity. Free milk alone is not enough to make good the effects of poverty.

At the same time, the attainment in relation to housing was investigated. The 37 wards of Glasgow were arranged in ascending order in six groups, according to the average number of persons per room in the wards at the 1931 census. The examination results refer to 1939.

The conclusion reached was:

“Attainment in English and Arithmetic at the qualifying stage is related to housing conditions, better housing conditions being associated with higher attainment.”

As housing is closely related to necessity, the findings with regard to the relationship between housing and educational level are a confirmation of the conclusion that attainment is related to economic necessity.

A further finding of this investigation was that the incidence of retardation increases as necessity increases, reaching a figure of 30 per cent in the poorest schools, justifying the formation of special classes for these children.

The report observes, however, that there was one notable exception to the rule formulated. Here the pupils scored on an average almost 10 marks more than was to be expected from their percentage of free milk distribution. According to this figure, the school should have been in Group 8 for educational level, while actually it was in Group 4.

The circumstances relating to this school show that it was in the centre of an experiment which began in January, 1937. An arrangement was completed for the institution of an experimental class in Dobbie's Loan School in an endeavour to solve the problem of dealing with pupils aged $9\frac{1}{2}$ to 10 years who were considered to be unlikely to pass the qualifying secondary school examination at the normal age.

Forty boys and girls were selected, most of them being in the "necessitous" category. Only those children were admitted to the Experimental Class whose parents agreed to abide by the conditions laid down in regard to hours of sleep, regular attendance and attention to minor ailments. The teacher in charge was specially selected and was relieved of responsibility for physical training, art, music and handwork. This compensated to some extent for the extra hours during which the teacher was on duty in school.

The pupils were provided with special clothing, into which they changed on arrival at school. Breakfast, dinner and tea, and milk were supplied and a shower bath given daily. A special curriculum was followed, with a bias towards recreational subjects, the purely scholastic subjects such as arithmetic and English being modified and lightened.

This experiment was to be continued until the age of 12, when the examination was to be taken. It was anticipated that with this modified curriculum, and more favourable conditions as regards feeding, etc., the class would approach the standard of attainment of a normal class under ordinary school conditions.

The experiment was more successful than the initiators had anticipated, the children doing even better than was expected of them.

In view of the direct connection claimed between physical and mental efficiency, the experiment conducted by Dr. A. H. Seymour and J. E. F. Whitaker is described somewhat fully. It is taken from the 1938 summer number of *Industrial Psychology*, organ of the National Institute for Industrial Psychology. The experiment aimed at finding the comparative effects on two groups of children of a properly balanced breakfast and of their

own deficient home breakfast. The children were drawn from an infants' school of ages about six years, all below the average in intelligence and coming from poor homes. It was found that the weight, the hand temperature, the apparent resistance to fatigue and the school achievement (in English, poetry and arithmetic) of an experimental group of children receiving a dietetically balanced breakfast were more satisfactory than those of an otherwise similar control group being fed at home as usual. The number of children tested (50) was relatively small. The results were not claimed to be conclusive, but the authors of the experiment were convinced that the conclusions which they drew would be confirmed by further experiments. They are certainly of sufficient importance to encourage further investigation.

The experiment was carried out in 1933 during an investigation by the N.I.I.P. on behalf of the National Union of Teachers, and arose out of the generosity of the Barking (Essex) Education Committee, who provided the meals and defrayed the cost. It was discovered that the hand temperature of the "C" group or backward group of infants was lower than that of the "A" section or bright children. 60 per cent of the "C"s were receiving unsatisfactory breakfasts, usually tea, bread and butter—probably margarine. Many of the "A"s were having porridge and eggs or bacon. A group of 50 backward children was investigated. They were arranged in two sections as nearly equal as possible in intelligence, physical condition and educational attainment. Their average age was the same—about 6.6 years. One section of 25, called the "experimental group", was provided with breakfast at school, consisting of fruit juice, porridge made with milk, fish or eggs, brown bread and real butter, and cocoa made with milk. The other, or control group, had the usual breakfast at home. The two sections formed a

single class taught by the same teacher in an ordinary classroom. The experiment lasted eight weeks, from February to April, 1933.

One difficulty at the start was to persuade the experimental group to sit down and eat their food in a leisurely way with knife, fork and spoon. They preferred to walk about with bread and butter in their hands or to jump up during the meals. It took ten days of gentle persuasion to make them keep seated and enjoy their food. Also, after ten days, the large increase in their mental output began.

They were all weighed at the beginning and end of the period. The experimental group gained .96 lb. in two months: the control group, .52 lb.

Hand temperature was taken twice daily on two parts of the hand—the middle of the palm and the tip of the first finger. The average temperature at the beginning was the same for both sections. The children having the special breakfast soon recorded a temperature of 1° C. higher each day than the other group. It was observed that after school breakfasts were discontinued, the average hand temperature of those previously receiving the breakfasts at school dropped in three days to that of the control group.

A Mental Output Test was conducted. The children were asked to cancel for three minutes every letter "O" which occurred in a sheet of 2,000 letters of the alphabet. This test was carried out twice every morning. The differences in the output of the two groups may be taken as giving some indication of difference in their resistance to fatigue. The average scores of the two groups were the same at the start. During the first ten days there was a small increase recorded for the "breakfast" group. After ten days, the increase became much greater. There was a gradual rise in the scores of both groups due to practice.

The experimental group showed 10 per cent more output than the home-breakfast group.

To estimate progress in knowledge in arithmetic and English, test papers were given before and after the experiment, in collaboration with the teacher. The "breakfast" children showed 10 per cent better results than the home-breakfast group.

The summary of the experiment and of the conclusions reached is: when an adequate dietetically-balanced breakfast is given to infant school children below the average intelligence, they develop a greater gain in weight, a higher hand temperature, greater mental output, and greater progress in school subjects than is shown by an otherwise identical group of infant school children who continue to have their unsatisfactory breakfasts at home. These children came, on the whole, from the poorer homes. Their hand temperatures were found to be, on the average, lower than those of other infant children above average in intelligence.

Dr. E. H. Wilkins, of Birmingham, had a special kind of vitamin chocolate milk prepared and supplied free by the Cow & Gate Research Department. A number of children were fed daily on this food as an extra to that taken at home, and these children were compared with another group of children of the same ages and home conditions, who, however, did not receive the supplementary ration. This group was called the "control group".

The following changes in functional conditions were noted in individual cases—longer and sounder sleep; reduced fidgetiness; improved appetite; increased energy; less frequent requests to urinate; less sweating; timidity and sleep-walking overcome; in general—awakened pride in personal appearance and improved cleanliness among

the boys; increased general spirits; better colour, better skin; less septic points and more rapid healing. These children, on the whole a dull and listless group, became so full of life as to have created rather a problem of school management.

On the educational side, there was improved response and power of concentration; greater interest; better memory; improved motor control; and greater zest and participation in play and school games. In five months, four children increased their reading age by 15 months; 18 months; 2 years and 2 years 5 months respectively. No similar increases were observed in the control group.

These results were obtained by only a partial correction of malnutrition. One may well wonder what would be the improvement if their nutritional deficiencies were wholly rectified. The fact that the other faults in their environment remained unaltered demonstrated the potent influence of proper food on the well-being of the children.

Dr. Corry-Mann conducted a classical experiment in human nutrition. He gave boys in an institution, well fed according to general standards, dietary supplements, one of which consisted of a pint of milk every day. The 41 boys who received the milk showed an average increase in weight of 6.98 lb. and in height of 2.63 inches for the year, while the control group that did not have the extra milk increased by 3.85 lb. in weight and 1.84 inches in height.

Another experiment was done by Major-General Sir Robert McCarrison. He planned supplementary rations so designed that they would make good the deficiencies in the children's total dietary. Thirty children received the extra food, while another 30—the control group—did not. The ages of the children were eight to nine years. They

APPENDIX III

were chosen from a normal, a backward, and mixed class. There was an equal number of boys and girls, and many came from very poor homes. The attendance over the five months showed:

| <i>Fed Group</i> | <i>Controls</i> | <i>Whole School (236)</i> |
|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 94.5 per cent | 92.8 per cent | 89.4 per cent |

Changes in weight, making allowances for various factors and excluding special cases, were—the Fed Group, 2.6 lb., or 5.5 per cent increase; the Control Group, 1.6 lb., or 2.8 per cent increase.

In Scotland, Sir John Boyd Orr gave 1,500 children extra milk for seven months. The rate of growth of these was 20 per cent greater than those elementary school children not getting this extra milk.

These investigations and experiments corroborate the usually accepted opinion that environment and physical and mental efficiency are closely related. They stress, however, the dietetic side of the child's life. The findings must have had a considerable effect in framing the School-Feeding Clauses of the 1944 Education Act.

A nutritional experiment to show the extent to which infant disease and maternal morbidity can be prevented was conducted by Drs. Ebbs, Tisdall and Scott, of Toronto University. (*Journal of Nutrition*, 1941.) They report:

"The pre-natal diets of four hundred women with low incomes were studied. One group found to be on a low diet was left as a control, a second group on a low diet was improved by supplying food during the last three or four months of pregnancy, and a third group found to have moderately good pre-natal diets was improved by education alone. Dur-

ing the whole course of pregnancy the mothers on a good or supplemented diet enjoyed better health, had fewer complications, and proved to be better obstetrical risks than those left on poor pre-natal diets. The incidence of miscarriages, stillbirths and premature births in the women of poor diets was much increased. The incidence of illness in the babies up to the age of six months, and the number of deaths resulting from these illnesses was many times greater in the Poor Diet group."

While it is recognised that there are other important factors in the successful outcome of pregnancy, this study suggests that the nutrition of the mother during the pre-natal period influences to a considerable degree the whole course of pregnancy, and in addition directly affects the health during the first six months of life.

Whereas 21 per cent of the babies in the Poor Diet Group suffered from frequent colds during the first six months of life, only 4.7 per cent were so affected in the Supplemented Good Diet and 4.7 per cent in the Good Diet Groups. Corresponding results were also obtained in respect of pneumonia, rickets, tetany and dystrophy. As for the mothers, the complications during labour in the Poor Diet Group were chiefly 6 per cent miscarriages, 8 per cent premature births and 3.4 per cent stillbirths, while in the Supplemented Good Diet Group there were only 2.2 per cent premature births and no miscarriages or stillbirths. The mothers in the Supplemented Good Diet Group proved to be better obstetrical risks. The average duration of labour was five hours shorter in this group than in the Poor Diet Group. "We noted", write the investigators, "a marked improvement in the general mental attitude of the patients in the Supplemented Group."

APPENDIX III

In 1944, Dr. Yudkin reported on examining the nutritional status and available income of 21 mothers and their 82 children, living in industrial towns. He arranged the families into two income groups—(1) the higher income group with an average income (after deducting rent) of 12s. 11d. to 17s. 7d. and (2) the lower income group with 7s. 11d. to 12s. 11d. average income per head. He found that the families with the higher average incomes were superior by the following amounts:

| CHILDREN | | | | MOTHERS | |
|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Height</i> (in.) | <i>Weight</i> (lb.) | <i>Haemoglobin</i> (%) | <i>Grip</i> (Kg.) | <i>Weight</i> (lb.) | <i>Haemoglobin</i> (%) |
| 0.2 | 1.6 | 2.1 | 1.4 | 16.0 | 7.3 |

This suggests that large families are less satisfactorily fed, since it has been shown that nutritional status is closely related to available income. In order to obtain more direct evidence, Dr. Yudkin made an analysis of the nutritional state of Cambridge school children in relation to size of family. Information was obtained from the parents as to the number and age of members of the family in January, 1943, and this was related to the results of the nutritional survey on the children carried out in January and February, 1943.

The children were from three different schools—two junior and one senior. The children in the junior schools were between 5 and 11 years of age; those from the senior school, 12 years (154 children). Junior school A (270 children) was in a poor part of the town, while junior school B (424 children) and the senior school were in a better part of the town.

He found that Cambridge elementary school children from larger families were on the average shorter and

lighter, and had lower haemoglobin levels and a weaker strength of grip, than children from smaller families.

These differences were greater in a poorer area of Cambridge as compared with a better area. It follows that the differences in nutritional status which had been observed between children from two areas of the town is diminished if children from small families are compared, and increased if children from large families are compared.

The social implication of these findings is clear. Except in the wealthier sections of the community, adequate physical development of the children of larger families cannot be achieved within present economic and social conditions. The increasingly unsatisfactory economic environment to which later children are exposed can only be avoided by some form of family allowance.

The inability of many families to attain a suitable nutritional standard for more than two or three children may be partly responsible for the present low reproductive rate. Since it is on the larger families that population maintenance chiefly depends, we must see that the children of such families grow up in conditions favourable to health and well-being. No one, however anxiously he looks towards a reversal of the present trend in population, would wish it to result in the production of a race of malnourished and inferior beings.

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